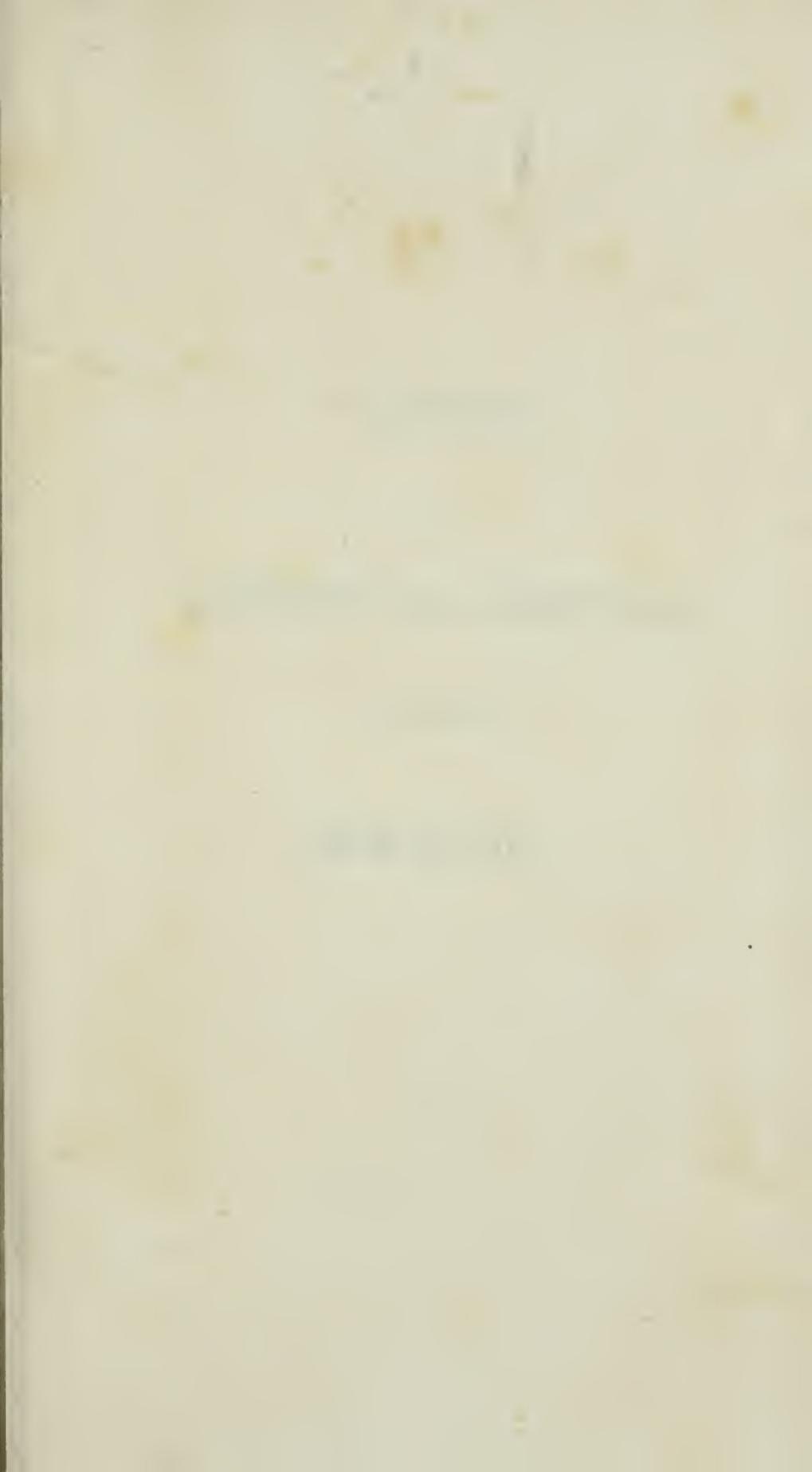


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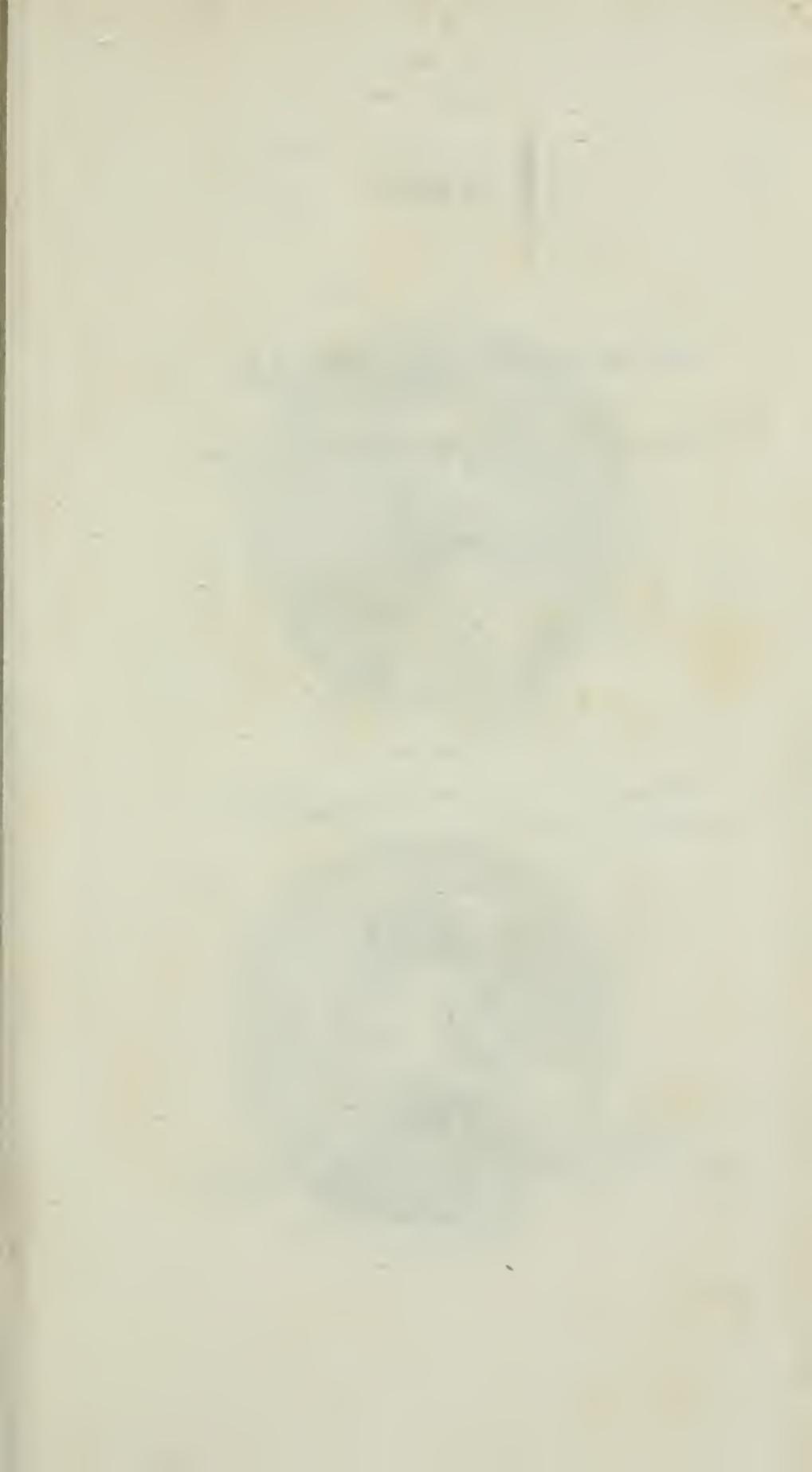






**CABINET
OF
AMERICAN HISTORY.
VOL. IV.
MEXICO.**

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Pedro de Alvarado



Christoval de Olid

THE
HISTORY
OF
ANCIENT MEXICO;

FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THAT EMPIRE TO ITS DESTRUCTION
BY THE SPANIARDS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY
THOMAS F. GORDON.

'Tis strange, but true; for Truth is always strange,
Stranger than fiction.

Byron. *Don Juan*, Canto xv.

VOLUME II.

PHILADELPHIA:

*Printed for and Published by the Author.
And for Sale by the principal Booksellers in the U. States.*

.....
1832.

Entered according to the Act of Congress in the year 1832,
by THOMAS F. GORDON, in the Clerk's Office of the District
Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

T. TOWN'S, STEREOTYPE. }
PHILADELPHIA. }

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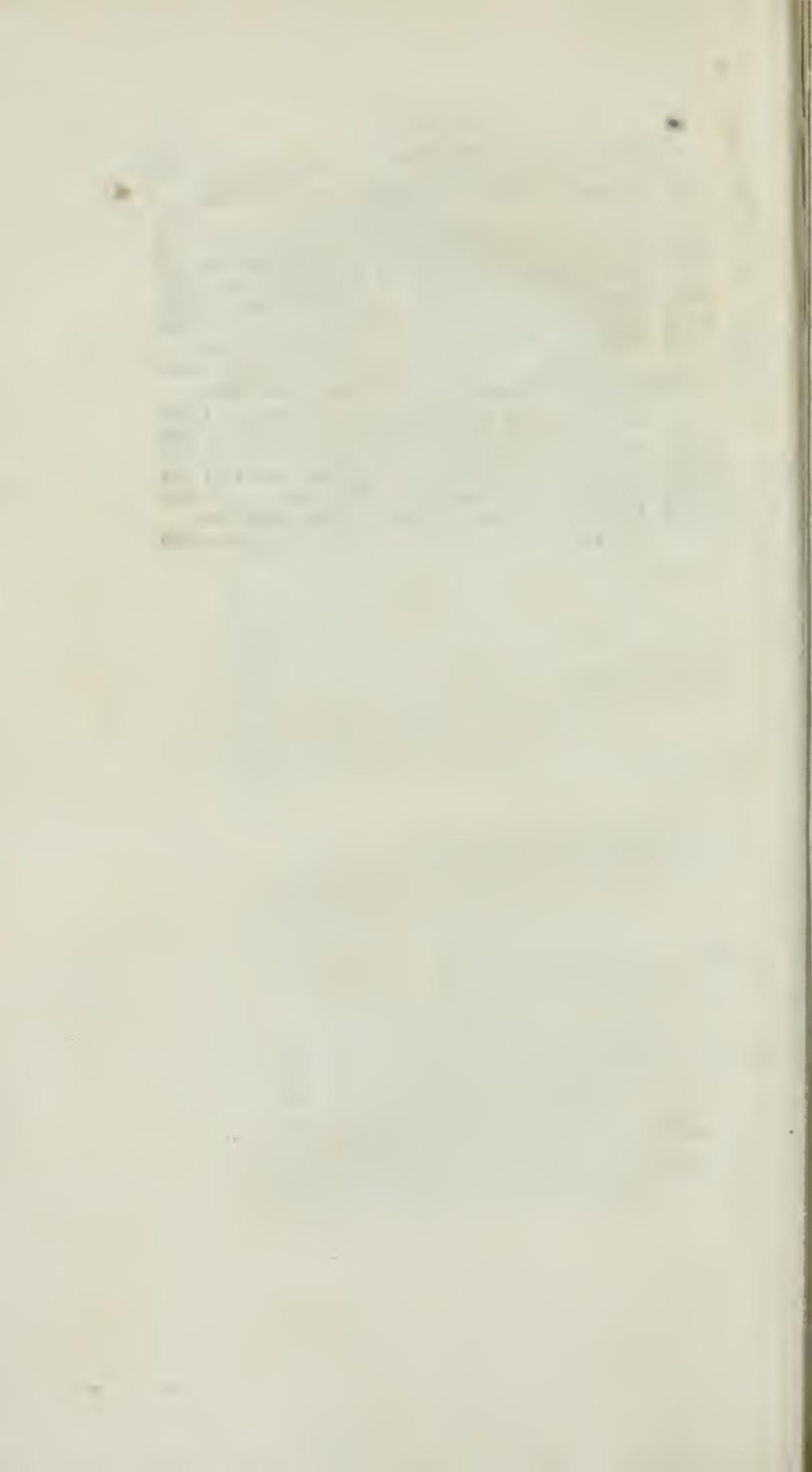
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HISTORY OF MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

- I. *Of the languages of America—General and improved character....*II. *Diversity of languages in Anahuac—Of the Mexican language....*
- III. *Mexican eloquence and poetry....*IV. *Mexican picture writing—General character....*V. *Mexican forms of manuscripts....*VI. *Contents of the manuscripts destroyed by the Missionaries....*VII. *Collections of original manuscripts—Character—Quippus....*VIII. *Manuscript of the Escorial, of Bologna, Veletri, Rome, Vienna, and Berlin....*IX. *Collection of Mendoza....*X. *Collection of Boturini....*XI. *Manuscripts in Mexico....*XII. *Description of a law-suit....*XIII. *Manuscript at Dresden....*XIV. *Copies of Mexican paintings in the Royal Library, at Paris.*

I. The language of every aboriginal nation of America appears, so far as it has been examined, to be framed upon a model essentially different, in its grammatical forms, from that, which prevails on the old continent. This difference consists, in the extraordinary compound of words, comprising many ideas, which it admits; and in the great order which prevails in its construction. From the first feature it has received the name of *polysynthetic*,

and from the second that of *syntactic*.* These peculiarities are discoverable, in the North, in the Karalit, or language of Greenland, and the Eskimaux, and in that of the Delaware, and the Iroquois; in Central America, in that of the *Pochonchi*, the language of Guatemala; in that of the Mexican proper, the Tarascan, the Mextican, and even the Ottomic, the least civilized of the tribes of Anahuac; and in South America, in the Caribbean and Auracanian languages, spoken by tribes dwelling at its two extremities. This extraordinary mode of compounding locutions, is not confined to joining two words together, as in the Greek, or varying the inflection, or radical word, as in most European languages; but it admits the interweaving of the most significant sounds, or syllables, of simple words, thereby forming a compound, awakening at once, in the mind, all the ideas expressed by the words from which they are taken; and an analogous combination of the various parts of speech, particularly by means of the verb, so that, its various forms and inflections express not only the principal action, but the greatest possible number of moral ideas and physical objects connected with it, and combine, to the greatest extent, those conceptions which are the subject of other parts of speech, and in other languages require to be expressed in distinct words.† Thus a

* The reader will obtain a very satisfactory idea of the Indian languages, by reading the able and lucid report of Mr. Duponceau, to the Historical committee of the Philosophical Society, and the very interesting correspondence between that gentleman and the late venerable Mr. Heckewelder, of Bethlehem, published in the transactions of that committee in 1819. And he may find much instruction on this subject in the *Mithridates, oder Allegemeine Sprachenkunde* of Adelung, and Vater. Berlin, 1806.—1817. 4 vol. Mr. Duponceau has given the names *polysynthetic* and *syntactic*, and they are most appropriately given, to the Indian languages.

† Duponceau, *ibid.*

word is made to express, the agent, the action with its accidents of time, place, and quality, and the object affected by them. With these admirable qualities, the American languages, so far from being “ limited, and so scarce of words, that it is impossible to express any metaphysical idea in them,” as M. De Pauw has asserted, are rich in words, sonorous, plastic, and comprehensive, and possess power to convey all the metaphysical mysteries of the christian systems. In speaking of the American languages, Baron A. Humboldt remarks,* “ that even such as have the same difference with each other, as the languages of Germanic origin, the Celtic and Sclavonian, bear a certain analogy, in the whole of their organization; for instance, in the complication of grammatical forms, in the modification of the verb according to the nature of its syntax, and in the number of the additive particles, the *affixa* and *suffixa*. This uniform tendency of the idioms, betrays if not a community of origin, at least, a great analogy, in the intellectual dispositions of the American tribes, from Greenland to the Magellanic regions.”

“ When,” says Mr. Duponceau, “ we cast our eyes for the first time on the original structure of the languages of the American Indians, and consider the numerous novel forms, with which they abound, it is impossible to resist the impression that forces itself upon us, that we are among the aboriginal inhabitants of a *new world*. We find a *new* manner of compounding words from various roots, so as to strike the mind at once with a whole mass of ideas;—a *new* manner of expressing the case of the substantives by inflecting the verbs which govern them;—a *new* number, (the particular plural,) applied to the declension of nouns, and

* Researches, Introduction, Vol. 1.

conjugation of verbs; a *new* concordance in tense of the conjunction with the verb; we see not only pronouns, as in the Hebrew, and some other languages, but adjectives, conjunctions, and adverbs, combined with the principal part of speech, producing an immense variety of verbal forms.”*

The number of languages in America, in a population scarce exceeding thirty millions, is said to amount to several hundred. But it has already been discovered, that many, supposed to be distinct languages, are merely dialects of one, which the configuration of the soil, or the apprehensions of the mountaineers under the tropics, of exposing themselves to the burning heat of the plains, have contributed to multiply. And in the constitution of this great number, languages are regarded as different, which bear the same affinity to each other, not as the German and the Dutch, the Italian and the Spanish, but as the Danish and the German, the Chaldean and the Arabic, the Greek and the Latin. As the labyrinth of idioms is penetrated, it is apparent, that several are susceptible of being classed by families; a still greater number however remain insulated like the Biscayan, among the Europeans, and the Japanese among Asiatic languages. This separation, may be apparent only, and those which now have an independent rank may, on further examination, prove to be connected with others.†

The diversity of languages in Anahuac, was very considerable. Some of these were radically different from each other, but the greater portion, we believe, were mere dialects of extensively pervading tongues. Grammars and dictionaries are said to have been given of seventeen, but of others, no

* Trans. Hist. committee, American Philosophical Society.
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† Humboldt's Researches, Introduction.

methodical account has yet been published. The Mexican language, however, was the most prevalent; being understood and spoken every where; and was proper to the Chechemecan, Toltecan, Acolhuian, and Aztec races.

II. This language wants the consonants, B, D, F, G, R, and S, and abounds with L, X, T, Z, Tl, Tz: but though the letter L is very frequently used, it never occurs at the commencement of a word. No words, except some vocatives, have an acute termination; almost all have the penult syllable long; the aspirates moderate and soft, and the pronunciation is never, necessarily, nasal. Notwithstanding the curtailment of the alphabet, the language is copious, polished, and expressive; and many Europeans who have mastered its idioms, have preferred it above the Greek; certainly not without reason when, its plastic genius is considered. Its copiousness is apparent, from the natural history of Hernandez, who for a description of twelve hundred plants, more than two hundred species of birds, a great number of quadrupeds, reptiles, insects, and minerals, found in it distinct proper names. Nor was it less rich in terms for metaphysical ideas. The highest mysteries of religion are expressed in it without the aid of foreign words.

Acosta wonders that the Mexicans having an idea of a Supreme Being, Creator of heaven and earth, had not a word to express it, equivalent to the *Dios* of the Spaniards, *Deus* of the Romans, *Theos* of the Greeks, *El* of the Hebrews, and the *Ala* of the Arabs; for want of which, he says, the missionaries were compelled to use the Spanish word *Dios*. But the worthy father overlooked the word *Teotl*, not less similar in sense than in sound to the word *Theos*, which excessive delicacy of the preachers who caused the destruction of the histo-

rical paintings, led them to reject; lest its use should revive the superstition of their converts. These pious pastors neglected in this instance the example of their great prototype St. Paul, who in his mission to the Gentiles, unhesitatingly adopted the *Theos* of the Greeks; causing it thenceforward to signify a Supreme, Eternal and infinitely perfect Being. Many theologians, however, who have written in Mexican, have used the word *Teotl*, as well as the words, *Tloque*, *Nahuaque*, *Ipalnemoani*, and other terms which the Mexicans applied to the invisible God.

Like the Hebrew and French, the Mexican language wants the superlative term; and like the Hebrew and most of the living languages of Europe, the comparative term, which are supplied by particles equivalent to those used in the modern European tongues. It abounds, more than the Tuscan, in diminutives and augmentives; and more than the English in verbal and abstract terms; for there is scarce a verb from which there are not many nouns, and scarce a substantive or adjective, from which there are not some abstracts formed. The power of the verbs, in combination with other parts of speech, as in other Indian languages, is uncommonly great. Thus, *Chihua*, is to do; *Chichihua*, to do with diligence, or often; *Chihuilia*, to do to another; *Chihualtia*, to cause to be done; *Chihuatiuh*, to go to do; *Chihuaco*, to come to do; *Chiutiuh*, to be doing, &c.* “The

* The analogy which prevails in the construction of Indian languages, very variant in other particulars, and spoken by races widely distant from each other, will be very striking, by comparing the following instances of the compound verbs with similar verbs of the Mexicans. The Abbe Molina informs us amidst a number of compound words of the Araucanian language, spoken on the extreme S. W. coast of South America, that, “*iduancloclarin*” means “I do not wish to eat with him,” and Mr. Heckewelder gives us “*n’schingiwipoma*,” a compound verb of the Delaware language, expressing, “I do not like to eat with him.” [Trans. Hist. Com. Am. Phil. Soc.] Mr. Duponceau, in

verb among the Indians is truly the *word* by way of excellence.”*

The style of address in the Mexican language varies, according to the rank of the person, with whom, or about whom, the conversation is holden, by adding to the nouns, verbs, prepositions and adverbs, certain particles expressive of respect. Thus, *Tatli* means *father*; *Amotta*, your father; *Amotzin*, your worthy father. *Tleco* is *to ascend*. If one commands his servant to ascend a certain place, he says simply *Xitleco*; but if he ask this of some respectable person, he will say, *Ximotlicahui*: and if he wishes to be still more ceremonious and respectful, *Maximotlicahuitzino*. This variety beautifying and polishing the language, does not, however, render it difficult to be spoken; because it is subjected to fixed and easy rules, and is extremely regular and methodical.

commenting on the Indian languages, says, “Nor are the participles less copious. Every verb has a long series of participles, which when necessary can be declined and used as adjectives.” And he instances the following from the causative Delaware verb *Wulamalessohen*, *to make happy*. *Wulamalessohalwed*, *he who makes happy*. *Wulamalessohalid*, *he who makes me happy*. *Wulamalessohalquon*, *he who makes thee happy*. *Wulamalessohalat*, *he who makes him happy*. *Wulamalessohalquenk*, *he who makes us happy*. *Wulamalessohalqueek*, *he who makes you happy*. *Wulamalessohalquiehtit*, *he who makes them happy*. “Now comes,” Mr. D. continues, “another participial pronominal vocative form, which may in the same manner be conjugated through all the objective persons. *Wulamalessohalian*, *thou who makest me happy*,” &c. “What,” exclaims Mr. D., with amiable enthusiasm, “would Tibullus or Sappho, have given to have had at their command, a word at once so tender, and so expressive? How delighted would be Moore, the poet of the loves and graces, if his language, instead of five or six tedious words, slowly following in the rear of each other, had furnished him with an expression like this, in which the lover, the object beloved, and the delicious sentiment which their mutual passion inspires are blended, are fused together in one comprehensive appellative term? And it is in the languages of savages that these beautiful forms are found! What a subject for reflection, and how little do we know, as yet, of the astonishing things that the world contains!”

* Duponceau’s correspondence with Heckewelder.

In their compounds, the Mexicans do not, like the Greeks, employ the simple words, entire, but after the manner we have already noticed, select discriminating syllables or *letters*. Thus *Tlazotli* signifies *valued* or *loved*, *Mahuitztic*, *honoured* or *revered*; *Tespixqui*, *priest*; and the last is a compound of *Teotl*, *God* and the verb *Pia*, *to hold*, *guard* or *keep*; *Tatli* is father, as we have just said. To write the five words in one, they take away eight consonants and four vowels, and say, *Notlazoma-huitzteopixcatalzin*, “my very worthy father, or revered priest.” A word of this kind is common, and is not the longest; there are some which have fifteen or sixteen syllables. These compounds are resorted to for definition or description; and are beneficially employed in naming animals, plants, and places whose names occur frequently in history; indicating always, in the last case, the situation, or property, or action, connected with them. Many of the expressions are so strong, that their sense cannot be rendered more vivid, and this is particularly the case, on the subject of love.

III. With a language so pliant and comprehensive, the arts of poetry and eloquence would seem to be inseparably allied; and they were much cherished by the Mexicans. Persons destined to be orators, were carefully instructed in elocution, from their infancy; and taught to study and repeat the most celebrated orations of their ancestors. Their art was chiefly employed in the national councils, in congratulatory addresses to their princes, and in embassies to foreign or subject states. Their discourses were commonly judicious, adapted to the occasion, and oftentimes elegant: and even when oppressed and abased by political and domestic slavery, the propriety and force of their public harangues, excited the admiration of their oppressors.

But their poets, we are told, outnumbered their orators; and their compositions were remarkable for the attention given to cadence and measure. So carefully indeed, were these qualities regarded, that the Mexican, sometimes, ran into the vice of more civilized nations, sacrificing sense to sound, by the frequent introduction of words, for the sake of euphony alone. The language of their poetry was commonly brilliant and pure, figurative and agreeable; and its subject embellished, by comparisons with the most pleasing objects in nature. It was in song, too, that they chiefly used their compound terms, of which a single one sometimes extended through the longest verse.

The scope of poetical composition was as wide as among the most civilized nations. In the temples and the sacred dances, the priests hymned the praises of the gods; at their feasts they sang the victories of the nation, the glorious deeds of its heroes, the triumphs of love and the pleasure of the chase; and in their didactic poems, they conveyed lessons of morality and the arts. The priests, who were the chief poets, taught their compositions to their pupils, and by this means strengthened and maintained their power over the nation. We have already recorded the taste and skill of the royal Nezahualcoyotl, in the joyous science. His example excited his subjects to cultivate it, and multiplied the number of poets at his court; and we have a signal instance of the power of song, in disarming the stern and cruel justice which distinguished that prince. It is related, that a bard, condemned to die for some crime, composed an ode in prison, taking leave of the world so pathetically, that it moved the king to continue him longer in it.

The Drama, the sister art of Poesy, was not unknown; and Boturini has spoken in terms of high praise, probably much too high, of the Mexican

dramatic productions. The description of Acosta, however, has greater probability; and he paints the amusements of a semi-civilized people. In the temple of Quetzalcoatl, at Cholula, (and in other teocallis,) was a small theatre, thirty feet square, curiously whitened, adorned with green boughs and fitted up with great neatness; surrounded by arches of flowers and feathers, among which were placed birds, rabbits, and other pleasing natural objects. Around this stage the spectators collected in the after part of the day, to enjoy the mimicry of the actors; some of whom, counterfeiting the sick, the deaf, the halt, and the blind, appeared in the temple to petition the Gods to alleviate their miseries, and produced much mirth by the play of cross purposes, and the ludicrous representation of their assumed infirmities; some disguised as beetles, toads, lizards, and other animals, encountering each other, reciprocally explained their employments, and filled their characters with considerable ingenuity; boys metamorphosed into butterflies and birds of various hues, mounted upon trees, at whom the priests threw small balls of earth with their slings, occasioning comical incidents, which gave much delight to the spectators. These spectacles were exhibited only on high festivals and always terminated in a dance, wherein the players and the audience intermingled.* These scenes remind us of the first dramatic essays of the Greeks. Had the Mexican empire continued a century or two longer, their dramatic art might have attained admirable proficiency.

The first Christian missionaries availed themselves of the love of the Mexicans for poetry and music, to inculcate the lessons of the faith. The Franciscan monk Sagahun, composed in pure and elegant Mexican, a hymn for each day of the year;

* Acosta. *Stor. Nat. e Mor. delle Indie*, lib. v. chap. 29.

and the Indian converts, many others in praise of the true God.

IV. The most extraordinary circumstance connected with the races inhabiting Anahuac, was the system for preserving and transmitting knowledge; *the picture writing* common to the Toltec, Chechemecan, Aztec, and other races. No satisfactory evidence has yet connected this system with any other; and it would seem to be, wholly of American origin. The first effort to convey ideas by visible and permanent signs, was, certainly, in rude copies of the outlines of sensible objects. Such was, and still is, the utmost skill of the unlettered savage of the North American wilds, in representing the triumphs of war, or the chase. The next was by conventional application of such drawings or of parts thereof, to definite objects, and in an allegorical sense; still preserving, however, some analogy between the thing and its representative. The third step was the invention of arbitrary symbols, between which and the object designated, there was no visible relation. The fourth, and most perfect, was the *phonetic character*, representing sounds, first syllabic, and afterwards univocal. The writing of the Mexicans, was composed of all these modes of representation, chiefly, however, of the first, and having very little of the last. The collections, improperly called American manuscripts, contain a great number of paintings, which may be interpreted or explained, like the sculptures on the Trajan column, but few characters susceptible of being read. These form the chief subjects of the pictures in the collection of Mendoza, published by Purchas, in the fragment of the Vienna collection, engraved by Dr. Robertson, and in the annexed engraving representing a law-suit tried subsequent to the conquest. The conventional application of portions of the paintings to a definite object is ex-

emplified by the symbols of the day, night, midnight, year, century, water, earth, &c. and the perfectly arbitrary symbol, by the numerical signs: and this last symbol seems to have been sometimes systematically used, and to have formed symbolical writings not less regular than those of Egypt. Although the Mexicans were wholly deficient in signs for simple sounds, they had a species of phonetic symbol which indicated relations, not only with things, but with the words spoken. Thus the names of individuals, of cities and mountains, having generally some allusion to objects that strike the senses, have enabled the Aztecs to write them, by signs which indicate at once the *words* composing them. The verbal translation of Axajacatl, is *face of water*; that of Ilhuicamina, *arrow which pierces the sky*; therefore, to represent the kings Montezuma Ilhuicamina, and Axajacatl, the painter united the hieroglyphics of water and sky, to the figure of a head and of an arrow. The names of the cities Mahuilxochitl, Quauchtinchan, and Tehuilojacan, signify, *five flowers*, *house of the eagle*, and *place of mirrors*; to indicate which they painted a flower, placed on five points, a house whence issued the head of an eagle, and a mirror of obsidian.*

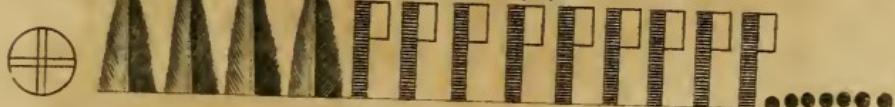
V. The Mexican paintings which have been preserved, have a great resemblance, not with the hieroglyphical writings of the Egyptians, but with the rolls of Papyrus found in the swathings of the mummies, which may be considered paintings of a mixed kind, uniting symbolical and isolated characters with the representation of an action. The Egyptians used more freely, the simple hieroglyphic. But notwithstanding the imperfection of the American signs, the paintings were good substitutes for books, manuscripts, and alphabetical cha-

* Clav. b. 7. Humboldt's Researches, vol. 1. pl. xiii.

Numerical Characters & Symbolical Figures.



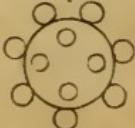
The Year 1787.



Day



Night



Midnight



Year



Century



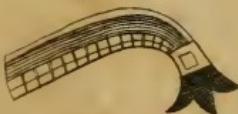
The Heavens



Air



Earth



Water





racters. The facility with which the artists made the paper of maguey, contributed to render the practice of painting very common among them. Their figures were not traced on separate leaves, nor were the substances on which they were painted formed into rolls, but were folded in a zig-zag form, somewhat after the mode now used for putting up maps. Two tablets of light wood were pasted at the ends, one at the top and the other at the bottom, which gave the volume a strong resemblance to our bound books. But on opening the Mexican manuscripts, as we do our books, we see only half the characters at the same time, being those painted on the same side of the skin or paper. To examine all the pages, if that name may be given to the folds of a band, often forty feet long, we must extend the whole sheet from the left to the right, and then from the right to the left. In this respect the Mexican paintings are similar to the Siamese manuscripts, preserved in the public library at Paris.* In a Mexican book, the painter or writer might commence at either angle of the great sheet; but if, at the upper angle on the right, he proceeded towards the left; if at the upper angle on the left, which was most common, he continued straight downward; if at the left lower angle, he progressed towards the right; if at the right lower angle, he proceeded upwards; so that, on the upper part of the sheet, he never painted from left to right, nor on the lower part from right to left; and never mounted from the left, nor descended by the right. With this understanding, all difficulty in pursuing the subject, by the reader, is obviated.†

VI. The volumes which the first missionaries of Spain collected, but to destroy, consisted of historical annals, rituals indicating the periods of reli-

* Humboldt's Researches, ib. † Clavigero, vol. 1.

gious sacrifices, cosmogonical and astrological representations, documents relative to law-suits, and the divisions of lands, lists of tribute payable to the crown, genealogical tables, by which the descent of property was determined, calendars showing the intercalations of the civil and religious year, and the representations of the pains and penalties which the law inflicted on crimes.

VII. M. de Humboldt says, that his travels in Europe and America gave him an opportunity of inspecting a greater number of Mexican paintings than any other author, who since Boturini has written upon the monuments of ancient civilization in the New World, and that, the resemblance between those which he saw, at Veletri, at Rome, at Bologna, at Vienna, and at Mexico, was so great, that they seemed copies of each other. They are all extremely incorrect in the outlines, but, display a scrupulous attention to detail, and great strength of colouring, which is so used as to produce the most striking contrasts. The figures are in general dwarfish in the body, like those of the Etruscan reliefs, but in correctness of drawing are far inferior to the most imperfect paintings of the Hindoos, the Chinese, the Japanese, or the people of Thibet. We behold in the Mexican paintings enormous heads, with very short bodies, and feet, which from the length of the toes, look like the claws of a bird. All this denotes the infancy of the art; but we must remember, that in this picture writing, the learned priests of Mexico, attached as little merit to correct drawing in their labours, as the literati of more civilized countries, to a fine hand writing in their manuscripts.*

The frequent use of mixed hieroglyphic paintings, must contribute to spoil the taste of a nation thus

* Humboldt's Researches ib.

Symbols of the names of the Mexican Kings

Vol. 2

p. 13



Moctezuma II



Itzampanitzin

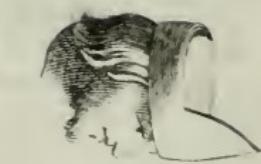
Moctezuma II



Ixtlilxochitl



Ahuitzotl



Nezahualcoyotl

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VII

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familiarized with hideous figures, and incorrect forms. To represent a monarch, who at a certain period had conquered a neighbouring nation, the Egyptian, in the perfection of his writing, ranged in the same line a small number of isolated characters, formed after inanimate objects, expressive of the full series of his ideas: The Mexican to express the same thing, painted a king armed, overthrowing a warrior, characterized by the banner of the city to which he belonged. But to abridge his labour, he painted only what was indispensable, to convey his conceptions. We have already remarked, that the signs appropriated to religious subjects, must have been early fixed and tenaciously preserved. And this must have been the case with other branches of knowledge in proportion as they attained a systematic and stable form. Hence the degree of improvement, in the mimic arts, must not be taken as the measure of the civilization of the Aztec race. Before the advent of the Toltecs it would seem that the natives of Anahuac, made use of knots or cords of various colours, common among the Peruvians, and by them called *quippus*, and which have been found also among the Canadian tribes, and in very remote times among the Chinese. This fact however, depends upon the testimony of Boturini, who avers that he procured a specimen of this *quippus* from Tlascalla, and upon, figures supposed to represent it in Mexican drawings.

VIII. From the researches of M. de Humboldt it appears, that there exist at present, in Europe, only seven collections of Mexican paintings, unless another be found in the archives of Simancas, in Spain; those of the Escurial, Bologna, Veletri, Rome, Vienna, Berlin, and Dresden. That of the Escurial, has the form of a book in folio. This circumstance, induces a suspicion that it is only a

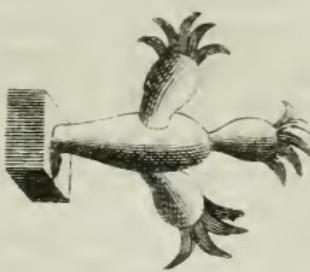
copy; since all others have the size of volumes, in quarto. It consists of forty sheets of maguey paper, covered, probably, with astrological, and religious matters. At the bottom of each page, is an interpretation in Spanish, added since the conquest. That of Bologna, is deposited in the library of the Institute of Sciences of that city. Its origin is unknown, but we read on the title page, that it was ceded the 26th of December, 1665, by the Count Valerio Zani, to the Marquis of Caspi. It is formed of a thick, and ill prepared skin, about nine feet long. The characters seem to have an allusion to the constellations, and to astrological notions. An engraved copy of this *Codex Mexicanus*, may be found in the museum of Cardinal Borgia, at Veletri. The collection of Vienna, consisting of sixty-five pages, has become celebrated, since it fixed the attention of Dr. Robertson, who has published in the appendix to his history of America, a few pages in outline only, and without colouring. A note annexed to this *codex*, asserts it to have been presented by Emanual, of Portugal, to Pope Clement the Seventh; and it passed through many hands until 1677, when it was presented to the Emperor Leopold, by the Duke of Saxe Eisenach: * The Codex Borgianus, of Veletri, is the largest, and most remarkable for the splendour and variety of the colours. It is a ritual and astrological almanac and once belonged to the family of Giustiniani. By some unlucky chance it fell into the hands of the domestics of that house, who gave it as a play thing to their children. It was rescued from destruction by an enlightened lover of antiquities, Cardinal Borgia; but not before attempts had been made to burn some folds of the deer skin upon which the paintings are delineated. Nothing

* Rob. Am. Humboldt's Researches, ibid.

p. 12



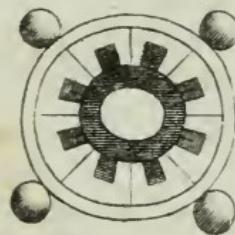
Vedduzzano



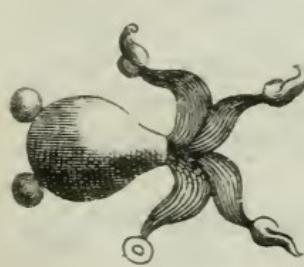
Mura



Lunuzzano



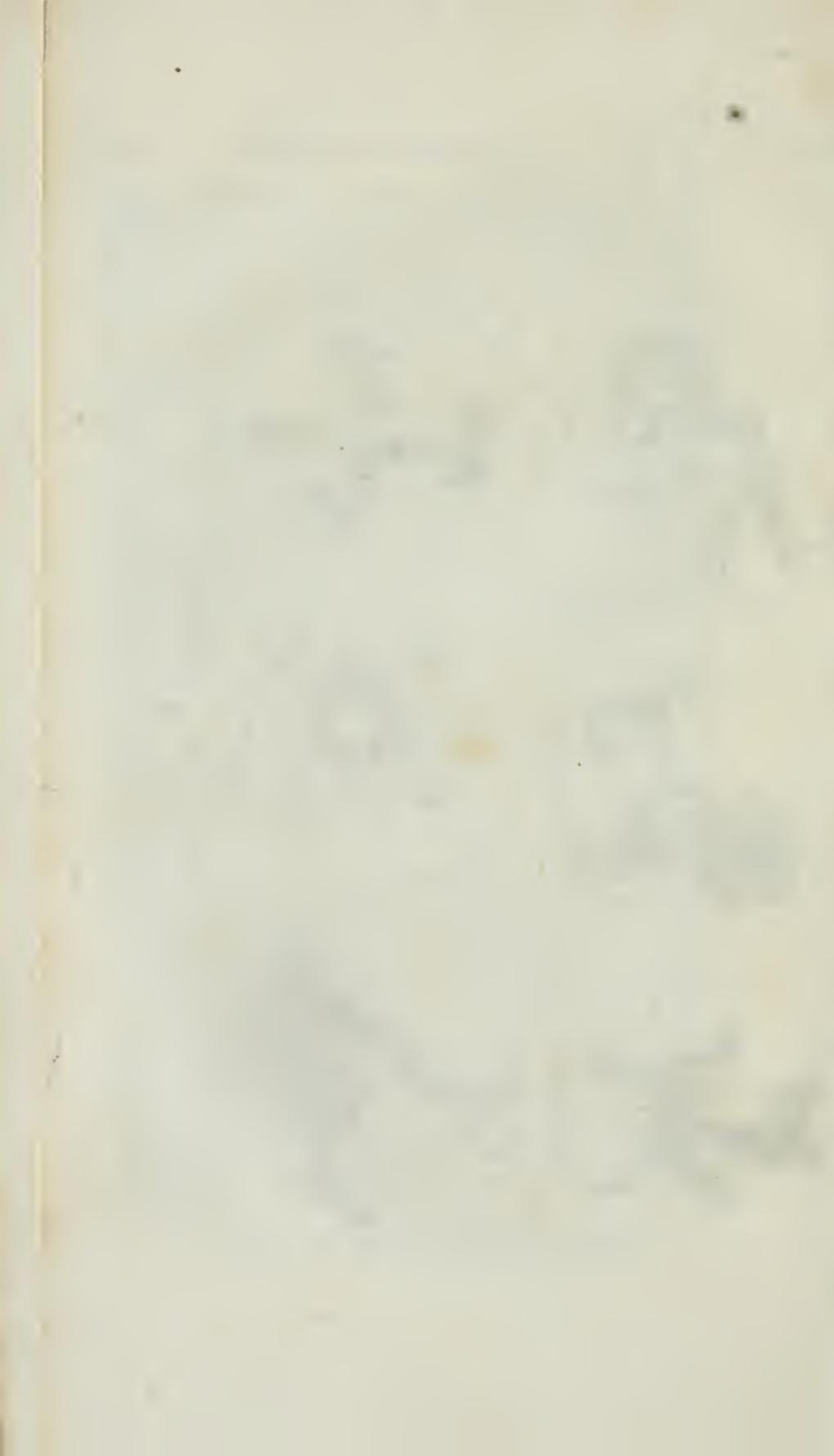
Circolo di Città



Mocchano



Vedduzzano



indicates the age of this manuscript, and it is perhaps, but an Aztec copy, of an older book. The collection in the royal library at Berlin, contains, several paintings, collected by M. de Humboldt, in Mexico; comprehending lists of tributes, genealogies, the history of the migrations of the Mexicans, and a calendar made soon after the conquest, in which the simple hieroglyphics of the days are united to figures of saints painted in the Aztec style. The library of the Vatican, at Rome, possesses among its collection of manuscripts, two *Codices Mexicanani*, numbered 3738, and 3776, in the catalogue. These and that of Veletri, were unknown to Dr. Robertson. It would seem that another volume of Mexican drawings was formerly in this library, but is now lost, unless it be that in the Institute of Bologna.*

The Codex, No. 3776, is about 125 inches long, and 7 inches square when folded. There are forty-eight folds, forming ninety-six pages; or as many divisions, marked on both sides of several doe skins, glued together. Every page is sub-divided into two compartments, except the first eight which consist of the simple hieroglyphics of the days arranged in rows parallel to each other. The border of each fold is divided into twenty-six small compartments, containing the simple hieroglyphics of the days. Every page exhibits in the sub-divisions two groups of mythological figures. We should lose ourselves in vain conjectures were we to attempt interpreting these allegories; the manuscripts of Rome, Veletri, Bologna, and Vienna, having none of those explanatory notes which enrich the Mendoza collection.

In the thirteenth plate of Humboldt's picturesque

* Humboldt's Researches, 1. Mercatus degli. Obelischi di Roma, 2. p. 96.

Atlas, he has given a copy of the ninety-sixth page of the *Codex Vaticanus*. The drawing, No. 1. represents an adoration; the Deity has on a helmet, remarkably ornamented; he is seated on a small bench, called *icpalli*, before a temple, of which, only the top, or small chapel placed on the upper part of the pyramid, is represented. The adoration in Mexico, as in the East, consisted of touching the ground with the right hand, and carrying the left to the mouth. In this drawing, however, the homage is rendered by a genuflection, and the attitude of the figure, prostrate before the temple, is found in several paintings of the Hindoos.

The group, No. 2. of which the annexed plate is a copy, represents the celebrated *serpent woman* Cihuacohuatl, called also Quilaztli or Tonacacihua, *woman of our flesh*; the companion of Tonacateuctli. The Mexicans considered her as the mother of the human race; and after the god of the celestial paradise, Ometeuctli, she held the first rank among the divinities of Anahuac. She is always represented with a great serpent; and other paintings exhibit a feather headed snake, cut in pieces by the great spirit Tezcatlipoca, or by the sun personified, the god Tonatiuh. "These allegories remind us," says Humboldt "of the ancient traditions of Asia. In the *woman and serpent*, of the Aztecs, we think we perceive, the Eve of the Semetic nations.—In the scotched snake the serpent *Kalinga*, or *Kalinaga*, conquered by Vishnu, when he took the form of Krishna. The Tonatiuh of the Mexicans, appears also to be identical with the Krishna, of the Hindoos, recorded in the Bhagavata Purana, and with the Mithras of the Persians. Behind the serpent, who appears to be speaking to the goddess, are two naked figures of different colours, contending with each other. We might be led to suppose that the two vases, which

we see at the bottom of the picture, one of which is overturned, are the cause of this quarrel. The serpent woman was considered in Mexico as the mother of twins.”* One possessed of less than an ordinary share of christian enthusiasm, might see in this painting, no equivocal illustration of the book of Genesis, by the representation of the temptation of Eve, and the first great evil consequent on her disobedience, the slaughter of one of her children by the hand of another.

IX. The most important collection of American manuscripts, is that to which we have oftentimes referred in the preceding volume, and which was made by Don Antonio Mendoza, first viceroy of New Spain, and destined by him as a present to the emperor Charles V. The ship in which they were sent to Spain was taken by a French cruiser: and they came into the possession of Thevet, the king’s geographer, who having himself travelled in the new world, and described one of its provinces, was a curious observer of whatever tended to illustrate the manners of the Americans. On his death they were purchased by Hackluyt, at that time, chaplain of the English ambassador at the French court; and being left by him to Purchas, were published at the desire of the learned antiquary, Sir Henry Spelman.† They were translated from English into French by Melchezedeck Thevenot, and published in his collection of voyages. A.D.1683.

The fate of the original paintings is unknown. Some authors‡ assert that they are preserved in the

* Humboldt’s Researches.

† Purchas, iii. 1065. 2 Robert. app. note 35. Clavigero, vol. 1. and Humboldt, Researches, vol. 1. 182. Lond. ed. says that Thevenot’s copy is very erroneous; the events, for instance, which had place under the reign of Ahuizotl, are there indicated under the reign of Montezuma.

‡ Warburton’s Essay on Hieroglyphics, vol. 1. p. 18. Papillon, Histoire de la Gravure en Bois,

royal library at Paris, but Humboldt deems it certain, that for a century past, this library has contained no Mexican manuscript.

The collection and commentary of Mendoza throw light upon the history, political state and domestic life of the Mexicans. As published by Purchas, in sixty-six plates, it is divided into three parts; the first, contains the history of the Aztec dynasty from the foundation of the city of Mexico in the year 1325 of our era, to the death of Montezuma the Second in 1520; the second, a list of the tributes of the empire; and the third, sketches of the domestic life and manners of the Aztec people. The commentary of the Viceroy Mendoza has rendered this collection very interesting to the historian. From this source has been drawn much of the matter of the preceding volume, relating to marriages, to the ceremonies at the birth of a child, his education, diet and employment; to the judiciary system and punishment; and to the forms of religion. One of the most complicated and ingenious paintings of this code, is that representing a *tlatoani* or governor of a province, strangled for revolting against his sovereign: for the same picture records the crime of the officer, the punishment of his whole family, and the vengeance exercised by his vassals against the state messengers.

Another specimen of Mexican writing was published by Dr. Francis Gemelli Carreri, in two copper-plates; the first, a map or representation of the progress of the ancient Mexicans, on their first arrival in the country, and the various stations in which they settled, before they founded the city of Mexico; the second, the chronological circle, representing the cycle of fifty-two years, which is found in our third volume. He received both from Don Carlos de *Siguenza y Gongora*, a creole of Mexico and a diligent collector of ancient Mexican

documents, and their genuineness is recognised by Boturini, and Acosta.*

X. A third specimen of Mexican painting was discovered by Lorenzo Boturini Benaduci. This indefatigable antiquary, an Italian, set out for New Spain in 1736, and was led by several incidents to study the language of the Mexicans, and to collect the remains of their historical monuments. He employed nine years in his researches with extraordinary enthusiasm and exemplary patience. In 1746 he published at Madrid, *Idea de un Nueva Historia General de la America, Septentrional*, containing an account of the result of his inquiries, to which he added a catalogue of his American Historical Museum, arranged under thirty-six heads. His collection of paintings alone, amounted to nearly five hundred. Unfortunately, a ship in which he sent the greater part of his museum to Europe, was taken by an English privateer during the war between Great Britain and Spain, which commenced in 1739; and it probably perished by falling into the hands of ignorant captors. Boturini, himself, incurred the displeasure of the Court of Spain, and died in a hospital at Madrid. The remainder of his museum, like that of Siguenza, was dispersed; but some slight remnants of it were preserved, till the expulsion of the Jesuits, in the Library of St. Peter and St. Paul, at Mexico; the greater part, which was confiscated, was torn and pillaged by persons ignorant of their value. What existed in the palace of the Viceroy, at the period of M. de Humboldt's visit, (A.D. 1800,) composed only three packets, about 25 inches square by 20 in thickness. They had long remained in one of the damp apartments, on the ground floor, with the archives of the government. They represent the migrations of the

* Rob. Am. app. vol. 2. note 35. Clavigero, vol. 2. app. Humboldt's Researches.

Aztecs from *Rio Gila* to the valley of Tenochtitlan, the foundation of several cities, and wars with the neighbouring nations.*

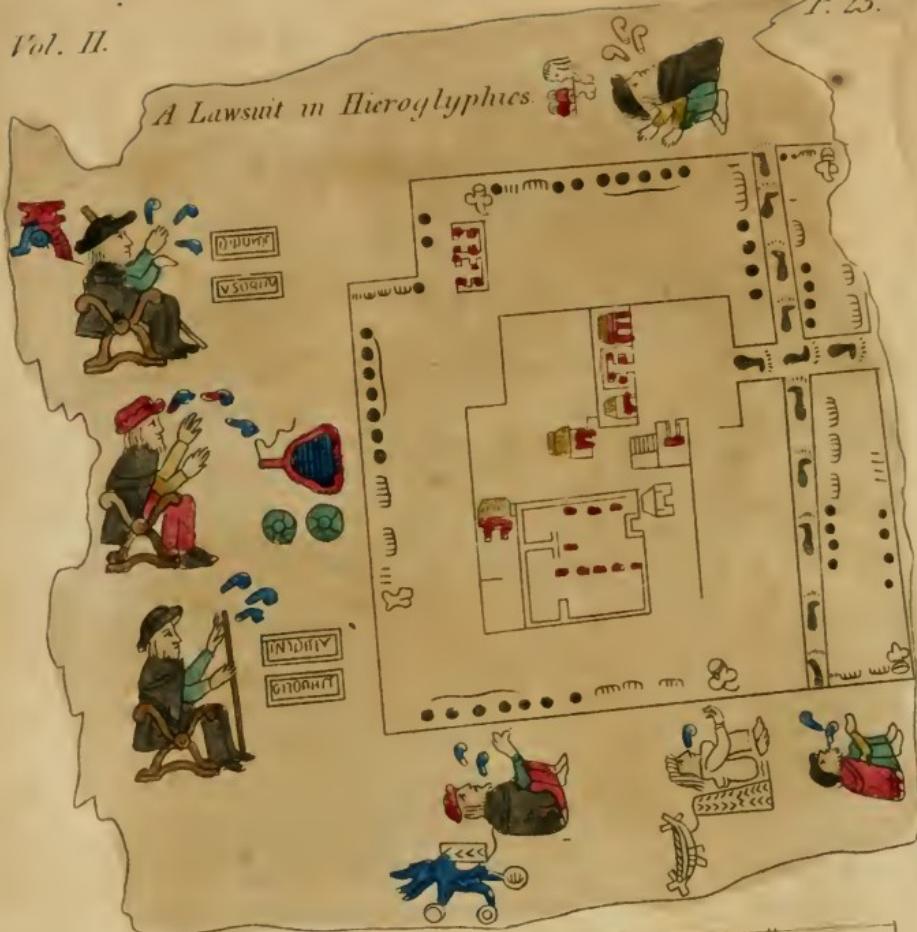
XI. Hieroglyphic paintings have become so scarce in Mexico, that a great part of the well informed men who reside there, have never seen any. The library of the University no longer possesses any originals, and among the remnants of Boturini, there are none so fine as the *codices Mexicanos* of Veletri and Rome. The finest collections in the capital are in the hands of private individuals.† M. de Humboldt conceives, however, that several objects important to the study of history, may still be found in the hands of the Indians who inhabit the province of Mexico, Puebla and Oaxaca, the Peninsula of Yucatan, and the kingdom of Guatemala, peopled by emigrants from Aztlan, and advanced in civilization,—that, a traveller, who understanding the Aztec, Tarask, and Maya languages, could obtain the confidence of the natives, might still collect, three centuries after the conquest, and a hundred and twenty years after the visit of Boturini, a considerable number of historical Mexican paintings.‡

XII. Plate ., is a representation of a law suit, taken from a painting, executed soon after the conquest, exhibiting the genealogy of the princes of Azcapozalco. It is one of the most intelligible of the Mexican designs, and a specimen of the mode of colouring. Although the division of labour was carried to a considerable extent, the profession of a lawyer was unknown under the dynasty of the Aztec kings. The parties in person, pleaded their causes before the courts, whether of the first in-

* Rob. Clavigero. Humboldt.

† M. de Humboldt names *P. Jose Antonio Pichardo*, as the owner of the best collection, who, beside the result of his own labours, inherited that of M. de Gama.

‡ Humb. Researches.

A Lawsuit in Hieroglyphics.

M.S. in the Vatican Library.



stance or of dernier resort. As sentence was not immediately pronounced each of the disputants was interested in leaving with the judges a painting or writing to remind them of the principal object in dispute. In criminal cases, the picture offered by the prosecutor, represented the accused not only at the moment when the crime was committed, but, also in the different circumstances of his life preceding this action. In pronouncing sentence of death, the king marked with the point of a dart, the head of the culprit in the picture. The use of paintings in law suits, was continued in the Spanish tribunals long after the conquest. When the Emperor Charles V. with the design of encouraging the culture of the arts and sciences in these distant regions, founded in 1553, the University of Mexico, three professorships were established; one for teaching the Aztec language, another for the Otomite, and a third for explanation of hieroglyphical paintings.*

The painting we have selected, according to the interpretation of M. de Humboldt, indicates a law suit between some natives and Spaniards. The matter litigated is a farm, the plan of which is traced in orthographical projection. The high road indicated, by the marks of feet; the house sketched in profile; an Indian whose name indicates a bow, and Spanish judges seated on chairs with the laws before them, are very distinctly recognized. The Spaniard immediately above the Indian, was probably called Aqua Verde; the symbol of water painted green, being figured behind his head. The tongues are very unequally divided. The conquerors with long beards talk much and loud; whilst the smock-faced and subject native, scarcely dares to defend his cause.†

XIII. The Codex Mexicanus in the public library of Dresden, is one of the most valuable relicks of Mexican science, since it seems to be wholly composed of the simple hieroglyphics, analogous to those of the Egyptians, and the keys of the Chinese; and leads us to suspect, that we yet know very little of the perfection attained by the Mexicans in the art of writing. This manuscript was purchased at Vienna, by the librarian Goetze, in his literary journey to Italy in 1739. It is on maguey paper, and forms a folded volume, such as we have described, above twenty feet in length, having forty leaves, which are seven inches, three lines long, and three inches, two lines (French,) wide, with paintings on both sides. This form, also, distinguishes the Dresden manuscript, from those at Vienna, Veletri, and in the Vatican. It is assimilated also to the works of the Chinese, by the uncouth painting of a sacred animal, recumbent and pierced with darts, and by the lineal signs, such as were invented by an emperor of China, two thousand nine hundred and forty-one years before our era.*†

XIV. Although the library at Paris possesses no original Mexican manuscript, it contains a valuable volume, in which a Spaniard, an inhabitant of New Spain, copied, either toward the end of the 16th or commencement of the 17th century, a great number of hieroglyphical paintings. The copies are carefully made and bear the character of original drawings. The volume belonged formerly to Le Tellier, archbishop of Rheims. In its outward form, it resembles the manuscript preserved in the library of the Vatican, No. 3738. Each hieroglyphic figure is accompanied by explanations in

* Klaproth *Asiatisches Magazin*, 1802. B. 1. p. 91. 521
and 525.

† Note A.

Mexican and Spanish, written at different periods, more instructive, according to Humboldt, than those annexed to the collection of Mendoza, and have the Mexican names more correctly written. This volume contains, a ritual almanac, a book of astrology, and a Mexican history from the year 5 Tochtli, or 1197, to the year 4 Calli, or 1561. The last merits particular attention. It includes a space of three hundred and sixty-four years. With this history, Boturini, Clavigero, and Gama, were unacquainted; and it seems to be of the greatest authenticity. From the year 1197, to the middle of the fifteenth century, it records few facts. Scarce one or two in an interval of thirteen years. From 1454, the narrative becomes more circumstantial; and from 1472, to 1549, it relates, almost from year to year, whatever was remarkable in the physical and political state of the country. The pages comprehending the periods from 1274 to 1385, from 1496 to 1502, and from 1518 to 1529, are wanting. In this last interval, the Spaniards entered Mexico. The figures are misshapen, but often of great simplicity. Among the objects most worthy of note, are the image of the king Huitzilihuitl, who having no legitimate children, took a paintress for his mistress, and who died in the year 13 Tochtli or 1414; the falls of snow, in 1447, and 1503, which caused a great mortality among the natives, by destroying the crops; the earthquakes of 1460, 1462, 1468, 1480, 1495, 1507, 1533, and 1542; the eclipses of the sun in 1476, 1496, 1507, 1510, 1531; the first human sacrifice; the appearance of two comets in 1490, and 1529; the arrival and the death of the first bishop of Mexico, Zumaraga, in 1532, 1549; the departure of Nunez de Gusman, for the conquest of Xalisco; the death of the celebrated Pedro Alvarado, called by the natives Tonatiuh, the sun, on account of his flaxen hair; the baptism

of an Indian by a monk; an epidemic malady which depopulated Mexico under the Viceroy Mendoza, in 1544 and 1545; the insurrection and punishment of the negroes of Mexico, in 1537; a tempest which devastated the forests; the ravages made by small pox among the Indians in 1538, &c. The variety and scope of these annals exemplify in the most striking manner, the capacity of conveying ideas which the Mexican system of writing possessed.*

In concluding our notice of the Mexican paintings we may observe, that notwithstanding the vast number destroyed by the catholic missionaries, immediately after the conquest, and the present dearth, there yet remained enough to supply the materials for the ancient history of Mexico, both to the Spanish and Mexican historians. All the works of Don Ferdinand Alba Ixlilxochitl, of Don Dominic Chimalpain, and others named in our appendix,† were composed from Mexican manuscripts. Hereafter, when we shall treat of the origin of the inhabitants of America, we shall examine this subject more profoundly, than is compatible with the present part of our enterprise.

Some years since, we saw many very well executed drawings exhibited at the Masonic Hall, in Philadelphia, said to be copies from Mexican originals, and taken in Mexico. They consisted principally of single subjects, of vases, and other vessels. We saw nothing which we think, according to present recollections, could be construed into historical narrative, or continued story. The drawings we learn have been taken to England, and have been splendidly engraved, at the expense of a nobleman friendly to the arts.

* Humboldt's Researches, Appendix.

† See note B.

CHAPTER II.

- I. Comparison between the Indian races of the islands, &c. and the Mexicans....II. Velasques proposes the conquest of Mexico—His difficulty in the choice of a commander....III. Biographical notice of Hernando Cortes....IV. Cortes assumes the honors of his office of General—Liberally urges forward the expedition—Efforts of his competitors to injure him with Velasques—Departs from St. Jago de Cuba....V. Chief officers who accompanied Cortes....VI. Notice of Alvarado—Olid—Sandoval....VII. Velasques repents the appointment of Cortes, and commands Verdugo to divest him of his command....VIII. Cortes proceeds from Trinidad to Havanna—His vessel runs aground—Alarm and discord among the troops, occasioned by his absence—Second attempt of Velasques to remove Cortes from the command....IX. Cortes resolves to put to sea, against the orders of the Governor....X. His departure from Havanna—Forces of the expedition....XI. Alvarado arrives at Cozumel before the fleet—His imprudent conduct there—Is censured by Cortes....XII. Wise policy of Cortes—Treaty with the inhabitants of Cozumel—Hears of Aquilar, a Spaniard long among the Indians—Casts down the idols of the natives and erects the cross....XIII. Departure of the expedition from Cozumel—Returns on account of one of the vessels springing a leak—Receives Aquilar....XIV. Fleet arrives at Tobasco—Hostility of the natives—They are conquered, and submit to the Spanish crown....XV. Cortes leaves Tobasco, and arrives at Ulua—Difficulty in communicating with the inhabitants—Is removed by a fe-

male slave....XVI. Notice of *Donna Marina*.XVII. Message from the governors of the Province—*Cortes* lands and establishes his camp.XVIII. Receives a visit from the governors—Demands to be introduced to the king—Present from Montezuma....XIX. Mexican painters describe the Spaniards and their equipage....XX. Disquietude of Montezuma—Causes thereof....XXI. Embassy from Montezuma to *Cortes*—Rich present—Montezuma declines his visit.XXII. *Cortes* persists in his intention to visit Mexico....XXIII. He seeks a more advantageous site for his colony....XXIV. Irresolution of Montezuma—Peremptorily prohibits the approach of *Cortes*—His present for the king of Spain....XXV. Diversity of opinion in *Cortes'* councils....XXVI. Remonstrance of *Ordaz*—*Cortes* consents to return to *Cuba*—Discontent and remonstrance of the army....XXVII. *Cortes* encourages the establishment of a civil colony—Resigns his office to the civil chiefs—Is elected by the council Commander-in-chief, and Chief Justice....XXVIII. *Cortes* arrests the leaders of *Velasques'* faction—Conciliates them....XXIX. The Spaniards are visited by the Chempoallese, and invited to their city....XXX. The army sets out for *Chiahuitzla* by the way of *Chempoalla*.XXXI. Foundation of *Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz*....XXXII. *Cortes* excites the Chempoallese to revolt—They imprison the collectors of the royal tributes—Duplicity of *Cortes*....XXXIII. Seven Spaniards desire to return to *Cuba*—Misrepresentation of the chief of *Chempoalla*....XXXIV. Indignation of Montezuma appeased by the report of his liberated officers—New Embassy—*Cortes* openly sustains the revolt of the *Totonecas*....XXXV. *Cortes* destroys the idols of *Chempoalla*....XXXVI. *Cortes* receives a re-

inforcement from Cuba—the council and himself address the king....XXXVII. Conspiracy among some soldiers to return to Spain—Discovery and punishment of the conspirators....XXXVIII. Cortes proposes and obtains the destruction of his ships....XXXIX. A vessel sent by Francis de Garay governor of Jamaica arrives on the coast.

I. Before the voyages of Cordova and Grijalva, an account of which has been given in the second volume of our Cabinet, the Spaniards had found in the New World, only a timid race, enervated by the softness of the climate, and the sloth and voluptuousness which it induced; or rude and barbarous tribes prone to violence, but unskilled in the arts, to make their ferocity terrible. The government of both these classes was of the simplest form, and such as is found in the earliest stages of political society. The discoveries upon the coasts of Yucatan and of the Mexican gulph had made known to the eager curiosity and cupidity of the Castilians, a people much advanced in civilization, practised in the fabrication and the use of arms, learned in systematic warfare, which they conducted by regular armies of mercenaries, experienced and inspirited by many and extensive conquests; rich in civil institutions, by which society was divided and graduated, by very artificial scales, science cherished, the rights to real and personal property established, and a complex religious hierarchy founded.

The importance of this discovery might well be compared with the original success of Columbus, and conceived to transcend the latter in beneficial results. In periods of less excitement, even Spanish daring might have paused, before it resolved upon the attempt to subjugate such a people, par-

ticularly after the evidence it possessed of their disposition to defend their shores and protect their institutions from foreign invaders. But the vast disproportion the Spaniards had hitherto found in arms and arts, and intellectual power, between themselves and the aborigines of America, led them justly to believe, that the inequality of their numerical force, scarce merited consideration in any contest with the latter.

II. Moved by these convictions, Don Diego Velasques, governor of the island of Cuba, by the appointment of the second admiral, did not hesitate with his slender means to attempt the conquest of an extensive and civilized empire, whose population was not less, in all probability, than seven millions. We have seen, that immediately after the arrival of Alvarado, and before the return of Grijalva, he had commenced preparations for the enterprise; but the choice of an able commander was not more requisite to success, than difficult to make. Velasques was himself ambitious, covetous of power and of fame, and not destitute of talents for government; but he was wanting in the energy and activity of mind, which would fit him to direct in person the armament he was preparing. He was therefore desirous to select an officer with courage and capacity to conduct the expedition, but, who, contented with some inferior reward, would yield to him the power and the glory which might result from success. But as the qualities of genius, courage, and prudence, are rarely united with poverty of spirit, his search was tardy and difficult; and when he thought it happily completed, resulted in the most bitter disappointment. There were in Cuba several adventurers, whose merits and connections authorized them to seek the command. Among them were, Antonio and Bernardino Velasques, relatives of the Governor, Baltazar Berinu-

dez, Vasco Porcallo, and other cavaliers; but none were supposed to possess the incompatible qualities desired by the Governor. After long and anxious deliberation, his choice was fixed by the influence of Amadar de Lares, the royal treasurer in Cuba, and Andres Duero, his own secretary, persons who possessed his full confidence, and who were the intimate friends of Fernando Cortes. They maintained their recommendation, of this extraordinary man, with great caution and judgment; rather leaving his qualifications and circumstances to operate upon the Governor, than risking to excite the suspicions of the latter, by fervent praises of their friend.*

III. Hernan, or Fernando Cortes, was born at Medellin, a small town of Estremadura, in the year 1485, of a noble, but reduced family. He was destined by his parents to the profession of the law, and was sent at an early age to the University of Salamanca, where he acquired some knowledge of letters. But this pursuit being uncongenial with an ardent temperament and great animal spirits, he retired to Medellin in disgust, and surrendered himself wholly to active sports, and martial exercises, the fit preparations for the employment he most coveted. The marked bias of his mind, his restless and impetuous disposition, and his dissipated habits, drew from his father a glad consent that he should seek his fortune in arms. There were at this period, two theatres, to which all who courted military glory resorted; one in Italy directed by Gonsalvo the Grand Captain, and the other in the New World. Cortes preferred the former, but being prevented by sickness, from embarking with a reinforcement of troops sent to Naples, he turned towards America, allured by the

* Solis, Herrera, Clavigero.

hope of the protection of Ovando, then Governor of Hispaniola, who was his kinsman. He landed on that island in 1504, was very favorably received, and immediately employed in honorable and lucrative stations.* The quiet state of St. Domingo, now wholly subjected to Spanish power, afforded little scope for his active and restless spirit; and with the assent of his relative, he passed over to Cuba, where Velasques was employed in reducing the inhabitants to obedience. Here, soon after his arrival, he married Donna Catalina Suarez Pacheco, a lady of noble family, but whose gallantry caused him some inquietude, to which the Governor was an auxiliary cause. But at length being taken into favor by the latter, he obtained an ample *repartimiento*, or donation of lands and slaves, the reward usually sought by adventurers to the New World.

Although hitherto unemployed in high commands, Cortes had occasionally displayed qualities, which raised him greatly in the esteem of his countrymen; who viewed him as one fitted for great actions. The turbulence of youth amid worthy and suitable occupations had subsided into regular and indefatigable activity. His impetuous temper restrained by intercourse with his equals, was mellowed into cordial and soldierly frankness. He was as prudent in concerting, as vigorous and persevering in executing his schemes, and he possessed in an eminent degree, that distinguishing mark of superior genius, the art of gaining the confidence

* Gomara relates that Cortes was to have accompanied Ovando in 1502, but was detained by an accident. Attempting in a dark night to scramble up to the window of a lady's bed-chamber, with whom he carried on an intrigue, an old wall, on the top of which he had mounted, gave way and he was so much bruised by the fall as to be unfit for the voyage.

Gomara, Cronica de la Nueva Espana cap. I. 2 Robt. Note xcviij.

and governing the minds of men. To these, nature had added a graceful person, a constitution of extraordinary vigour, and the power of endurance, united with a winning address; and he had, by long and careful practice, acquired great skill in all martial exercises.

IV. When Cortes had received his commission, as Captain General of the Armada, and of the countries near the Mexican coast already discovered and which he might thereafter discover, he acknowledged the favor with the warmest expressions of respect and gratitude. He immediately assumed the costume and insignia of his rank, erected his standard before his own house, and exerted himself strenuously to procure volunteers, and to hasten the preparations for the voyage. To this end, he employed liberally all his own funds, with whatever he could raise on credit, which were expended in the purchase of military stores and provisions, and in supplying the wants of his friends and companions.* These prompt and laudable efforts, were used by his disappointed, but not misjudging competitors, to alienate the mind of the Governor from the new General. They represented his liberality as ostentatious and interested, adapted and designed to secure the affection of the troops, and to render his own authority independent. They reminded Velasques of his former dissensions with the man, in whom he now placed so much confidence; and foretold, that Cortes would

* Herrera, Dec. 11. Lib. iii. c. 2. and Bernal Diaz, c. 20. inform us that Cortes had 2000 pesos in the hands of Andrew Duero, and borrowed four thousand.—These sums Dr. Robertson says, were equal to £1500 and as the price of every thing was very high in America, made but a scanty stock when applied towards the equipment of a military expedition. 2 Robt. Am. Note xcix. But if we consider that the peso or dollar of that day was worth five of the present, the sum was not inconsiderable.

be more apt to avail himself of the power put into his hands, to avenge past injuries than to requite recent obligations.* They endeavoured also, to assail him through his superstition, employing a demi idiot, whose want of understanding, here, as in the east, was held to give a just claim to prophetic power. This man, perfectly tutored, meeting the Governor, attended by Cortes and his friends, cried, to the former, "Well done, friend Diego! you will soon have occasion to send forth another squadron to bring back Cortes." These insinuations sank deep into the mind of the Governor, and Cortes and his friends soon perceived symptoms of growing alienation and distrust. By the advice of Lares and Duero, the General hastened his departure, before these should violently break forth. He sailed from St. Jago de Cuba on the 18th November, -1518, not clandestinely, as has been most improbably stated by Herrera, but with the full knowledge and consent of Velasques, whose suspicious, but unresolved mind, not yet determined to remove him, sought to alleviate its forebodings, by recommending to the officers of Cortes to keep a watchful eye upon every part of their commander's conduct.

V. The names of the gallant officers who accompanied Cortes in this expedition, and which will often recur in the subsequent story, were Juan Valasquez de Leon, a near relative of the Governor, Alonzo Hernandez Portocarero, Francisco de Montijo, Christoval de Olid, Juan de Escalante, Francisco de Morla, Pedro de Alvarado and his four brothers, Gonzalo, Jorge, Gomez, and Juan, Francisco de Salceda, Juan de Escobar, Gines de Nortes, Alfonso Davila, Gonzalo de Sandoval, Pedro Sanchez Farfan, Gonzalo

* Robt.

Mexia, and Bernal Diaz, the most *naive* of historians that has ever appeared among veteran soldiers. Of these, Pedro de Alvarado, Christopher de Olid, and Gonzalo de Sandoval, merit particular attention, as they were, under Cortes, the first commanders of the troops employed in the conquests and made the most distinguished figure in its wonderful and perilous events.

VI. Alvarado was young, tall, well proportioned, extremely agile, spirited, graceful, and popular; fond of luxury and pleasures, greedy of the gold which these tastes required, and not over-scrupulous of the means of obtaining it; fierce in combat and inclement after victory. Olid was stout-limbed, and of a dark complexion, and remarkable for temerity. Both were serviceable to Cortes, but both proved ungrateful, and met with a tragical end. Sandoval was a mere youth, scarce two-and-twenty, yet well formed and manly in figure, robust, with dark chesnut hair, thickly curled, and a voice strong and thick, remarkably sparing of words, but profuse in deeds. He enjoyed, in a high degree, the confidence of the General, who entrusted to him the most difficult and dangerous expeditions, which he always conducted with honor and success. He was beloved by the soldiers, to whom he was invariably kind and an example of faithful obedience; humane to his enemies, notwithstanding some charges made against him of merciless cruelty; and entirely free from that besetting sin of his countrymen, excessive avarice. He united prudence and discretion with the ardour of youth, bravery with humanity, modesty with merit, and humility with success.* Alvarado and Davila had been captains, and Bernal Diaz, an adventurer, in the expedition of Grijalva.

* Clavigero, book viii. vol. 1.

VII. Cortes proceeded to Trinadad, a small settlement, where he received several of his friends and an additional supply of stores. But he had scarce departed from St. Jago, when the suspicions of Velasques overpowered all remains of confidence; and as the barks lessened in the distance, the presentiment grew in the breast of the Governor, that his power over the expedition and its commander was departing from him. The rivals of Cortes did not fail to exaggerate these fears, and again resorting to superstition, they procured an astrologer to predict his future treason. It was yet possible to divest him of his General's truncheon, and Velasques hastily despatched an order, for that purpose, to Verdugo, the chief magistrate of Trinadad. But Cortes had so firmly fixed the affections of his troops, that finding officers as well as soldiers equally zealous to support his authority, he soothed or intimidated Verdugo, who not only permitted him to depart from Trinadad, unmolested, but undertook to calm or remove the unseasonable, and as he supposed, unfounded distrust of the Governor.

VIII. From Trinadad the expedition sailed for the Havanna, and a part of the troops passed thither by land, under the care of Alvarado, who had charge of the horses. The vessels arrived safely and without accident, except the Capitana, on which the General had embarked. She, on the night after leaving the port, ran aground; and it became necessary to unload the cargo and transport it to a neighbouring islet, before she could be gotten off. This labour, with that of reloading, detained the vessel seven days. In the interim, great alarm and discord prevailed among the troops at the Havanna. Some proposed to dispatch several barks in search of the inissing ship, whilst others suggested the nomination of another commander, during the absence of Cortes. The latter advice being supported by

Ordez, the near relative of Velasques, was held sinister by many, and earnestly repudiated. Fortunately, these differences which threatened to become mischievous, were dissipated by the arrival of the General. Several persons of distinction, here joined the fleet and engaged to supply such provisions as were still wanting; the delay in obtaining these, however, gave a new opportunity to the Governor to attempt the removal of the commander. Sensible that he ought no longer to rely on one, of whom he had so openly discovered his distrust, he loudly censured Verdugo's disobedience, and despatched a confidential agent to Pedro Barba, his lieutenant governor at Havanna, with peremptory instructions instantly to arrest Cortes and send him prisoner, under a strong guard, to St. Jago, and to countermand the sailing of the squadron until he should receive further orders. He wrote also to the principal officers, commanding them to assist Barba in the performance of this charge. But before the delivery of this order, a Franciscan friar of St. Jago had conveyed intelligence of its contents to Cortes, through Bartholomew de Olmedo, a monk of the same fraternity, and chaplain of the expedition.

IX. Thus forewarned, the General instantly resolved on his course. He had embarked in this adventure the fortunes of himself and his friends; and though the Governor had contributed to the expenses of the outfit, far the greater proportion had been supplied by them. He had around him a band of daring and adventurous men, of rank and family, who were, in official station only, inferior to the Governor himself, and who would not be easily turned from their pursuit of renown and wealth, and all the charms of the contemplated enterprise, by jealousies and suspicions, which at this moment had no apparent foundation. Upon their aid, he felt that he might confidently rely. His first step was to

remove from the Havanna, Diego de Ordaz, who on account of his resolute and penetrating spirit, his devotion to Velasques, and his conduct during the late involuntary absence of the General, he had much reason to dread. He therefore despatched him with a small bark, to take on board some provisions at a petty port beyond Cape Antonio. Immediately after his departure Cortes communicated to his troops, amid shouts of indignation, the intentions of the Governor. With one voice they conjured him not to abandon them, and pledged themselves to support him to the last extremity. He gladly complied with what he himself so ardently desired, and swore to lead them to that rich country which had been long the object of their wishes. Barba, who had no power to contend with such resolute adventurers, and who perhaps, was satisfied that the removal of Cortes was not less impolitic than impracticable, disclosed in the quarters of Cortes, his resolution to disobey the order, sent a messenger to the Governor with remonstrances against it; adding a recommendation that the latter should dismiss his groundless fears, and endeavour by new favors to reclaim the affections of the General.*

X. Every thing being at length prepared, Cortes made his last dispositions for departure. So great an enterprise was never attempted with feebler means. The utmost stretch of power in Cuba could furnish only eleven small vessels. The largest, of one hundred tons burthen, was dignified by the name of Admiral, and commanded by Cortes in person; three were of seventy or eighty tons, and the rest, small barks. On board these were six hundred and seventeen men, of whom five hundred and eight belonged to the land service, and a hundred

* Solis. Rob.

and nine were seamen and artificers. The soldiers were divided into as many companies as there were ships, to each of which a captain was assigned, having command of the vessel at sea and of the men on shore. As the use of fire-arms was only partially introduced in the armies of Europe, only thirteen soldiers were armed with muskets; thirty-two had cross-bows, and the rest swords and spears. There were sixteen horses, ten small field pieces, and four falconets. In lieu of the usual iron harness which had been found cumbersome in those equinoctial regions, the Spanish soldier prudently adopted the lighter armour of the natives, the Ichcahuepilli or *escaupile* as they pronounced it, jackets quilted with cotton, which were found to be sufficient protection against the Indian weapons. The artillery was commanded by Francisco de Orozco, an officer famed in the wars of Italy. The experienced Alaminos was chief pilot. With the usual combination of holy and profane purposes which directed all the measures of the Spaniards in America, Cortes emblazoned on his banners, the symbol and legend of the first christian standard of Constantine,* *Sigamos la Cruz; que en esta señal venecéremos.* "Let us follow the cross, for under this sign we shall conquer." In this conviction, which was as firmly fixed as their religious faith, six hundred men, with the means we have described, set forth to subdue an empire.

XI. Having resolved to follow the route pursued by Grijalva, Cortes gave orders to Alvarado, to seek de Ordaz, and to them, and other officers of the fleet, in case of separation, to rendezvous at the island of Cozumel. The Armament sailed from the Havanna on the 10th of February 1519; high mass being first celebrated, a duty which these pious

* *In hoc Signum Vincet.*

warriors never neglected. A tempest, which rose on the night of their departure, environed the frail barks with peril, and drove that commanded by Alvarado, so deep into the Gulph, that he deemed it more prudent to sail for Cozumel, than to obey the orders given him to unite with Ordaz, and he arrived at the island two days before the fleet. Finding the shores deserted, the inhabitants flying at the approach of the vessel, he, deeming that the duty of a soldier forbade inaction, or more probably, that the occasion was a happy one to obtain a rich booty, marched into the interior, and pillaged some food from the dwellings, and some gold and copper instruments and vessels, from the temples, which the people had also abandoned. Upon the arrival of Cortes, who had been joined on his passage by the ship of Ordaz, he censured publicly and severely the disobedience of Alvarado, and the license, he had taken: as adapted only to make enemies, where it was most desirable to leave friends.

XII. Cortes remained several days inactive, that he might not give further alarm to the natives; and the wisdom of this course became apparent, when, the inhabitants, loosing their apprehensions of danger, approached his camp, cautiously at first, but, soon to mingle in the utmost freedom with the soldiers. A treaty of peace and amity was formed with the Cacique; and the forbearance, of the General was most richly rewarded by obtaining an interpreter, the want of which formed one of the greatest obstacles to his enterprise. We have mentioned elsewhere,* that two of the companions of Valdibia, the messenger despatched by Balboa in 1510 to St. Domingo, had escaped from shipwreck and had been reserved from sacrifice by the inhabi-

* See Vol. II. p. 79

tants of Yucatan. Whilst conversing with the islanders, through the medium of one of the prisoners who had been captured by Cordova, Cortes heard the word *Castilla* repeatedly, but indistinctly, pronounced by his visitors, immediately instituted an inquiry, which resulted in the information, that these Spaniards were in the neighbouring territories of the continent, distant about four leagues. His first idea was to rescue his countrymen by force; but the friendly Cacique of Cozumel intimating that such an attempt might cause the death of the captives, the General, commanding his prudence, sent a party in two light vessels, under the command of de Ordaz, with instructions that one should coast for eight days at the point of Catoche, for the messengers, and that the second should report their progress. The Indians engaged in the mission were abundantly furnished with beads and other toys, to pay a full ransom for the prisoners. In the meantime Cortes resolved to survey the island. At a short distance from the coast, he discovered a temple in which was an idol, much venerated and wrought with no despicable art. The form was human, but the features were horribly distorted. The name Cozumel was given to the figure, whence that of the island was derived. When the Spaniards approached the sanctuary, they beheld amid a great concourse of Indians, a priest, who was addressing them with great force and gesticulation. Cortes immediately interrupted him, and turning to the Cacique who accompanied him, assured the latter, that the continuance of their friendship would depend upon the abandonment by himself and his subjects, of the worship of their false gods. He maintained the propriety of this demand, with so many, and such satisfactory arguments, that the astounded and convicted chieftain, who doubtless understood all that was said to

him, was wholly unable to reply.* But as he deferred in all religious matters, most wisely, to the priests,† he craved permission to submit the subject to their consideration. At the conclusion of their conference, a venerable minister of the altar surrounded by priests of inferior dignity, advanced towards Cortes, and in a loud voice denounced the vengeance of heaven against all who should dare to disturb the worship of its idols, declaring that, exemplary punishment would immediately follow the sacrilegious deed. But the General, equally instructed and zealous in the true faith, knew that heaven was leagued against, and not with, idolators; and, therefore, irritated by these empty threats, suffered, if he did not command, his equally zealous soldiers to cast down the hideous idols, and to substitute upon the altars, after purification, the more seemly simulations of the Virgin Mother, and the True Cross. The Indians, priests, and laity, beheld this bold deed of their daring visitors, with horror and dismay; but as the sun did not withdraw his light, nor the earth tremble, nor nature leave its usual order to avenge it, they recognized the great truth, that the deity is indifferent to the form of worship adopted by his creatures, so that it be innocent and sincere; or what is more probable, in their ignorance, they despised gods, so long suffering and slow to anger, and therefore readily transferred their adorations, to others more prompt to action, and sustained by greater power.

XIII. The Indian messengers not appearing within the time fixed for their return, Cortes weighed anchor and continued his voyage, but he was a few hours only at sea when he was compelled to return, in consequence of the leaky condition of the vessel commanded by Juan Ecalante. This

* Solis

† Cuique in sua arte credendum est.

was, indeed, a providential delay; for, at the end of four days employed in repairing the ship, our adventurers beheld, approaching from the continent, a canoe filled with armed Indians, who with unwonted diligence and regardless of the squadron, strained every nerve to attain the island. Upon landing, one of the party, in appearance like to his companions, stepped forward and addressed in Castilian, the soldiers despatched by Cortes to intercept them. This was Geronimo de Aquilar, whom eight years slavery among barbarians had almost converted into a savage, and who, whilst acquiring their language had almost forgotten his own. Through many years of suffering, he had finally attained a high degree of favor among his captors. Palos de Moguer, the other survivor of Valdibia's crew, who had reached the rank of a military chieftain; had wedded an Indian wife, and had several children, preferred the simple enjoyments by which he was surrounded, to the perils of Spanish adventure, and ingloriously, but not unwisely, abandoned himself to domestic happiness. Another reason, however, equally powerful for his refusal, was, that as an Indian leader he had planned and conducted the attack against Cordova the preceding year.*

XIV. The squadron set forth for the second time, from the island of Cozumel, on the 4th of March. Having doubled the cape of Catoche, Cortes, instigated by some soldiers who had been with Cordova and Grijalva, was disposed to land and chastise the inhabitants for their resistance to these captains, but was deterred by the remonstrances of his pilots, and the unfavorable position of the wind. Thence he proceeded to the river of Tobasco, attracted by the friendly conduct of the

* Bernal Diaz.

inhabitants towards Grijalva, and by the quantity of gold which he had obtained there. Cortes, however, was surprised to discover, that from some unknown cause, the disposition of the people was totally changed. A large force resisted his descent, with arms, turning a deaf ear to every amicable overture which he made them, by means of Aquilar, who perfectly understood their language. After an obstinate combat the Spaniards made good their landing; and though Cortes did not desire to commence his conquests here, nor to be delayed in his course, he deemed it indispensable to reduce the confidence, and chastise the presumption of his present enemies. The Indians driven from the shore, retired to their town of Tobasco, which was fortified by a wooded stockade. This, however, proved a feeble defence against the skill of the invaders, who, after a smart engagement without and within the walls, became masters of the city. This evident superiority of the Spanish power, would probably have induced the Tobascans to sue for peace, and to cultivate the favor of the conquerors, had they not been stimulated to try the fate of another battle, by the representations of Melchior, the survivor of the Indians taken by Cordova. This lad, leaving his Spanish garments hanging upon a tree, fled to his countrymen, and communicated to them the small number of the Spanish forces; informing them at the same time, that the strangers were not immortal, and were not armed with the lightning, as the Indians had supposed.—In a skirmish of the succeeding day, Cortes made some prisoners, from whom he learned that, all the Caciques of the country with their respective forces, had been summoned, and would with their united masses fall upon the Spaniards. Thus forewarned, he had time to get his horses on shore, and to make the best disposition for the attack. He called a

council of war composed, of all his officers, as was ever his custom on momentous occasions, and obtained their unanimous opinion that the subjection of this province was indispensable to their further progress.

Cortes drew out his army from the town and placed it in an elevated and advantageous position, where he awaited the approach of the enemy.* Confident in their numbers, which the Spaniards have given at forty thousand, the Indians rushed impetuously upon the lines, regardless of the discharge from the cross bows and arquebusses, and by a close conflict, rendering these weapons less available; but they were unable to withstand the keen and enduring edge of the Spanish sword, the overwhelming charge of the horses, and, the sweeping desolation of the artillery; and after a short but severe contest this immense army was put to flight, with the loss of eight hundred killed and many more wounded. The Spaniards lost by death only two men, but a considerable number was wounded.† To account for this great disproportion, the Spanish writers, after Gomara, resort to miracles, and relate, that Iago the tutelar saint of their country fought at the head of their countrymen, and, by his prowess determined the fate of the battle. The frank old soldier Bernal Diaz is much puzzled, to preserve a due respect to this relation and a strict regard for truth. “I acknowledge” says he “that all our exploits and victories are owing to our Lord Jesus Christ; and that in this battle there was such a number of Indians, to each one of us, that if each had thrown a handful of earth, they might have buried us, if by the great mercy of God we had not been protected. It may

* 25th of March.

† The Indians sustained this battle against such novel and superior weapons, for a full hour before they gave way.

be, that the person whom Gomara mentions, as having appeared on a mottled grey horse was the glorious apostle Signior San Iago or Signior San Pedro, and that I, as being a sinner was unworthy to see him. This I know, that I saw Francisco de Morla on such a horse, but as an unworthy transgressor did not deserve to see any of the holy apostles. It may have been the will of God that it was, so, as Gomara relates, but until I read his chronicle, I never heard among any of the conquerors, that such a thing had happened."

On the day succeeding the battle, Cortes ordered the prisoners, among whom were several chiefs, to be conducted into his presence. They appeared oppressed with fear, apprehending the fate which usually attended their own captives. But the conqueror receiving them with great benignity, set them at liberty, made them some presents, and dismissed them; saying, that, "He who knew how to conquer, also knew how to pardon." This clemency produced the happiest effects. Some hours after, there came to the Spanish camp, several Indians laden with maize, fowls, and other provisions, to beg a remission of hostilities and a pacification of peace. But at the instance of Aquilar, who represented that it was the practice among the nations of this country on such occasions, to solicit peace, not by men of the vulgar class, like the present petitioners, but by nobles clad in their best garments and adorned with jewels, Cortes refused to receive their proposals, bidding them inform their prince, that, "if he desired peace he must solicit it by more dignified ambassadors." On the next day appeared thirty nobles radiant with variegated plumes and glittering jewels, and accompanied by many servants charged with provisions. The general assuming high state, surrounded by his captains, received them with great gravity.

The ambassadors approached, with much humility and ceremony, casting before them a perfumed cloud of incense, from their burning censors, and, excusing the past conduct of their people, earnestly sued for peace. Cortes rebuked them with much severity, that his condescension might be the more valued, but finally granting their request, sent them away highly contented, and enriched by gifts which they greatly valued. The treaty of peace was confirmed by a visit from the principal Cacique, by the return of the inhabitants to their dwellings in Tobasco, and by the formal submission of the country to the crown of Spain. The General accepted a present of some cotton garments, some gold and twenty female slaves.* In memory of his victory he founded here a small city, to which he gave the name of *Madonna del Victoria*, which continued a long time the capital of the province, but which was depopulated in the middle of the 17th century by the frequent invasion of the English. The fugitive Melchor, was ungratefully treated by his countrymen for his patriotism, being sacrificed to the gods.

XV. Warned at length by his pilots, that further delay would peril his vessels, Cortes weighed anchor and continuing his course westward, along the province of Coatzacualco, and crossing the mouth of the river Papaloapan, entered the part of St. Juan de Ulua, on the 21st of April. As he sailed into the harbour a periogue, filled with people, two of whom, seemed persons of distinction, approached his ship, with signs of peace and amity. They came on board without fear or distrust, and addressed him in a most respectful manner, but in language altogether unknown to Aquilar. Cortes was in the utmost perplexity at an event, of which he instant-

* Solis, Herrera, Bernal Diaz, Clavigero.

ly saw all the consequences, and already felt the hesitation and uncertainty with which he should carry on the great schemes he meditated, if in his transactions with the natives, he must depend entirely upon such an imperfect mode of communication as the use of signs. He was delivered from this embarrassing situation by one of those fortunate accidents which seem to wait on daring enterprise. One of the female slaves he had received from the Cacique of Tobasco, understood the Mexican language and being present at this interview with his new guests, and perceiving his distress and the confusion of Aquilar explained what they said in the Yucatan tongue to the latter, who interpreted it to Cortes.

XVI. Donna Marina makes a considerable figure in the history of the conquest of Mexico. She was distinguished by birth, beauty and genius, and was born at Painalla a village of the Mexican province of Coatzalcualco. Her father had been a feudatory of the crown, under which, he held the government of several districts. Her mother becoming a widow married another husband, by whom she had a son. The greater love she bore to the fruit of her second marriage, led her to sacrifice that of the first. The daughter was given to some slave merchants of Xicallanco, who sold her in Tobasco, whose sovereign presented her to Cortes, unconscious that he was arming him most efficiently, for the conquest of the neighbouring nations. Beside her native tongue, she spoke the *Maja*, that of Yucatan and Tobasco; and in an incredible short period acquired the Spanish language also. Being instructed in the christian faith and solemnly baptized, she became the mistress of Cortes. She was ever faithful to the Spaniards, was their interpreter in all negotiations, and preserved them from many dangers by her knowledge of the language and her

acuteness in penetrating the designs of their enemies. She bore the Conqueror a son who was called Don Martin Cortes, was knight of the military order of San Iago, and was on account of some ill grounded suspicion of rebellion, put to the torture in the year 1568. During the long and hazardous voyage which Marina made with Cortes to the province of Honduras, in 1524, she passed through her native country, when her mother and brother presented themselves before her, bathed in tears and covered with confusion, dreading her vengeance for the wrongs done to her infancy; but she received them with great affection, and freely pardoned a crime which had been productive of such extraordinary results.*

XVII. Cortes now learned that the two distinguished personages he had received on board his ship were messengers from *Teuhtlile* and *Cuitlapitoc*,† officers entrusted with the government of that province, by the great monarch Montezuma; and that they were sent to inquire his purpose in visiting that coast, and to offer him whatever assistance he might need to continue his voyage. Surprised by the appearance of these ambassadors, as well as by the tenor of their message, he assured them in very respectful terms, that he came with the most friendly intentions to trade with them, and to confer with their prince on matters of great importance to him and his kingdom, which he would more fully communicate in person to the governors, and that he hoped for the same favorable reception which had been accorded to his countrymen in the past year. To conciliate the messengers he made them taste some Spanish wine, and presented to them some trifles, which he deemed worthy of their

* Clavigero, book viii.

† Not Pilpatoe, as Robertson writes it. Clavigero, ib.

acceptance. On the next morning, Good Friday, without waiting a reply, he landed his troops, with all their equipage, and assisted by the Mexicans raised and fortified his camp upon the sandy shore, where at present stands the city of Vera Cruz.*

XVIII. Upon Easter Sunday, Teuhtlile and Cuitlalpitoc attended by a numerous retinue arrived at the Spanish camp. Cortes received them with great ceremony, not, as naked and brutal savages, such as the Spaniards then held the natives of America, generally, but as the ministers of a great and powerful monarch, entitled to the courtesy due to civilized nations. High Mass was solemnly celebrated, after which the ambassadors were invited to partake of a sumptuous entertainment. When the cloth was removed, Cortes drew his guests apart, and informed them that he came ambassador from Don Carlos of Austria, King of Castile, the greatest king of the East, charged with propositions of such moment, not only to the person and estate of the Mexican monarch, but to the welfare of all his vassals that he could impart them only to the Emperor himself; and therefore, he expected, they would immediately conduct him to their prince, by whom he expected to be received with the kind attentions due to the greatness of the sovereign who had sent him.

Teuhtlile replied with dignity and courtesy to this demand. "You are scarcely arrived in this land, and yet desire immediately to see our king, I have listened with pleasure to your report of the greatness of your sovereign; but know, that ours, is not less great than he. I had not supposed that his equal in power existed in the world; but as you assert the fact, I will cause it to be communicated to him, and I cannot doubt, that he will re-

* Bernal Diaz. Solis.

joice in receiving intelligence of your monarch, and will do honor to his ambassador. In the mean time, I pray you to accept the inconsiderable present I now offer you in his name."* Upon which many slaves approached loaded with provisions, consisting of fowls, fruit, and roasted fish, ten packages of fine cotton mantles adorned with feathers, and a *petlacalli* or small basket of woven reeds containing golden ornaments, of admirable workmanship.†

Cortes received these articles with equal surprise and gratification. If the Mexican ambassadors designed to repress the inclination of the Spaniards to proceed to Mexico, they adopted the worst possible means to attain their object. The desire of the latter to become masters of a country abounding with such precious productions, was thereby greatly stimulated. Cortes repaid the present of the chief by one prepared for Montezuma, consisting of an arm chair, richly carved and painted, some artificial jewels enveloped in perfumed cotton, a string of artificial diamonds, and a crimson cap, with a gold medal, having the device of St. George killing the dragon.

XIX. During this interview, some painters, brought by the Mexican chiefs for the purpose, were engaged in delineating with much skill, upon prepared cotton canvas, figures of the ships, the horses, artillery, soldiers, and of every object which

* Robertson, after Solis, whom, notwithstanding his reprehension, he seems much to follow, says that Teuhltile at this interview endeavoured to dissuade Cortes from visiting Montezuma. Bernal Diaz, who was a witness to the interview, does not mention this, but says, that the Mexican assured Cortes his application should immediately be made, and an answer transmitted; and Clavigero denies the fact with some asperity, and observes that "it appears from the testimony of ancient and better historians, he did not oppose him until he had a positive order from his king to that purpose." Clavigero, book 8. note.

† Solis. B. Diaz. Herrera. Clavigero.

they deemed most worthy the attention of their prince. When Cortes was informed of this, in order to make a deep and vivid impression of his power on the mind of the King, he ordered the trumpets to sound to arms: the troops were instantly formed in order of battle, the infantry and cavalry performed their appropriate evolutions; the artillery pointed towards the thick woods, which surrounded the camp, was fired, and made great havoc among the trees. The Indians gazed upon these proceedings with stupor and amazement, until the canon were discharged, when some fled, others fell to the ground, and all were so much confounded, that Cortes had some difficulty to restore their confidence. The painters had now many new objects for their art, all of which, were, however, represented with great distinctness.* Teuhtlile, the most observing of the two officers, regarded with curious attention, a gilt helmet on the head of one of the soldiers, remarking, that it was similar to that which had been worn by one of their ancestors and now covered the head of their great God Huitzilopochtli, and begged permission to carry it to Montezuma. Cortes granted his request, stipulating that the helmet should be returned to him, filled with gold dust, that he might ascertain, whether that metal as dug from the mines of Mexico, was like that of his native country.†

XX. We have already noticed the establishment of carriers which was maintained by Montezuma;‡ and it would seem, that Teuhtlile had been trained in this service, from the speed with which he bore

* B. Diaz.

† Clavigero, book 8, note, reports, as he says, after some historians, that Cortes remarked, when making this condition, that his companions and himself suffered a certain disease of the heart, which could be cured by gold only. *Si non è vero è ben trovato.*

‡ Vol. 3. 265. 266.

the message and presents of Cortes to Montezuma. His colleague, Cuitlalpitoc remained near the Spanish army, that he might watch its motions, and render to its leader the hospitable services commanded by his king.

The reader will recollect, as we have stated, that about this time, many prophetic warnings had been given to Montezuma, of the approaching end of his dynasty; the destroyer of which he was taught to expect from the East, the quarter whence the Spaniards had come. The arrival of Cordova and Grijalva upon the neighbouring coast had already given him great uneasiness, and he looked for the next visit of these mysterious strangers with excessive apprehension, which was not diminished by the demonstrations now offered to him, of their power. He had instant recourse to his priests and his gods for consolation and advice. The former, averse to novelties which were not obviously pregnant with advantages to their order, and probably dreading the rivalry of a religion, of which they must have received some notion from those who had witnessed the sacrifice of the mass, counselled the monarch to reject the prayer of the Spaniards for admission to his presence.

To communicate this ungracious answer, the king selected a distinguished personage of his court, whose strong resemblance in form and feature to the Spanish general, he conceived might render it less offensive.*

XXI. In seven days after the departure of Teuhltile from the Spanish camp^t the ambassador, attended by a train of a hundred slaves, loaded with presents, arrived on the coast. When he came into the presence of Cortes, he touched the earth with his hand

* Bernal Diaz. See vol. 3, 348.

† The distance between Vera Cruz and Mexico is seventy leagues—210 miles.

and carried it to his mouth, offered incense to him and his officers, and seating himself on a chair placed for him, he congratulated the General in the name of the King, on his arrival in that country, expressed his majesty's pleasure in learning that men so gallant and brave, had visited his kingdom, and his satisfaction at the intelligence they had brought of their great monarch and at the nature of the present which had been sent him, a token of which he now offered by his minister. The magnificence of the present brought by the ambassador, was such as became the high rank of the donor. The articles were arranged in the most advantageous order for exhibition on mats and carpets; and the Spaniards beheld with admiration the various manufactures of the country, among which were gems beautifully set; figures of various animals in gold; thirty bales of fine cotton cloth of various colours, partly interwoven with rich feathers; several species of feather-work of surpassing excellence, embellished with golden ornaments; and the gilded casque filled with grains of native gold. But they were most astonished, by two large circular plates, one of gold, representing the sun, about five feet in diameter, valued by B. Diaz at twenty thousand crowns or five thousand pounds sterling; the other of silver, much larger, emblematic of the moon; each was surrounded with figures in bas relief. "This present," said the speaker to his delighted auditors, "my sovereign sends to the General and his companions, but for your King he will in a short time prepare jewels of inestimable value. In the meanwhile, you will remain on this shore, so long as it shall be agreeable to you, for repose after the fatigues of your voyage, and to provide yourselves with necessaries to return to your native country. If you desire any thing from us for your sovereign, it shall be given to you immediately; but with re-

spect to your demand of visiting our Court, I am charged to dissuade you from so difficult and hazardous a journey, the way lying through uninhabited desarts, and the country of our enemies."

XXII. Cortes received this rich and extraordinary present with many expressions of gratitude, but with a resolution more fixed than ever, if that were possible, to make his way to Mexico. He requested the missionaries to solicit again, of their master, permission for this purpose, and to represent to him the many dangers and privations the Castilians had already incurred, to make this visit, and the great disappointment and displeasure his sovereign must feel, should his hopes be frustrated; adding, that the Spaniards never weighed danger or fatigue against their duty. The embassador engaged to make this report to the king, and having received some small presents for himself, and others for Montezuma, he returned to the Court, taking with him Teuhtlile, who was joined in commission, but leaving the more warlike Cuitlalpitoc with a force to watch, if not to controul, the motions of the strangers.

XXIII. Finding himself in his present situation exposed to the inconvenience of heat and insects, and apprehensive of injury to his ships from the north wind, to which the harbour of Vera Cruz is exposed, Cortes despatched Montejo with two vessels, to survey the coast, toward Panuco, and seek a more advantageous port. In a few days, that officer reported, that he had found a desirable position, thirty-six miles from Ulua, near to a city well situated for defence.*

XXIV. The pertinacious adherence to his purpose by Cortes, roused the vindictive passions of Montezuma, and had he listened only to the sug-

* B. Diaz. Clavigero.

gestions of his indignation, the haughty monarch would have poured upon the presumptuous stranger and his petty army, the whole military force of his empire. In the first moments of angry excitement, he devoted them to his gods, and if at this moment he had marched upon the Spaniards, encamped on a sandy and sickly shore, where death had already assailed them, and where they must have contended unsupported by allies, and destitute of provisions; not even their superiority of discipline and arms, nor that fortitude which, as displayed in American warfare, is unmatched in history, could have withstood the shock, and they must have perished in the conflict, or have abandoned the enterprise.

But superstitious fear had already conquered the mind of the monarch, distracted his counsels, and relaxed the obedience of his subjects. From the moment the Spaniards appeared on the coast, this slavish passion displayed itself. Instead of taking such resolutions as the consciousness of his own power, or the memory of his former exploits might have inspired, he deliberated with an anxiety and hesitation which did not escape the notice of his meanest courtiers.* The sources of this weakness we have already traced to the singular traditions relative to the advent of foreigners, and the various inauspicious omens, which had been observed in several parts of the empire. Instead, therefore, of pursuing the just dictates of his outraged spirit, and expelling the invaders from his shores, he again summoned his counsellors, who were too subservient to the fitful temper of their master, even to attempt to lead him from his perplexity. They, therefore, approved his proposal of issuing a more positive command to the intruders to depart, but most preposterously accompanied the order with a rich pre-

* Rob. Am.

sent, which incited more powerfully their stay. Teuhltile bore to Cortes the emperor's decree and the present for the king of Spain. The latter consisted of various works of wrought gold, ten bales of robes of feather mosaic and four emeralds or precious green stones, each of which was valued by the Indians, at a load of gold. During this visit Teuhltile observed, that the Spaniards, at the sound of the bell, at the hour of prayer, knelt before the cross, and in wonder asked, why they adored that piece of wood? Father Olmedo thence took occasion to explain to him the principles of the christian religion, to remonstrate against the abomination of worshipping idols, and the inhumanity of their sacrifices. And Cortes added, that one of the great objects of his mission was the conversion of Montezuma and his subjects to the only true faith; and that having for this praiseworthy and disinterested purpose, come so great a distance, it was utterly impossible that he should return without having seen the king and attempted its execution. At this peremptory declaration, the Mexican officers turned from him abruptly, and quitted the camp with looks and gestures expressive of surprise and resentment.*

But the proceedings of Cortes did not receive the unanimous approbation of his followers. Among adventurers nearly of the same rank and serving at their own charge, the dignity of command did not elevate him above the necessity of mingling freely with them, and submitting his actions to their judgment. On the propriety of prosecuting their enterprise, various opinions prevailed. Many beholding the wealth of the country which their imaginations multiplied tenfold, would see no danger, nor conceive any impediment to its enjoyment: others

* Solis. B. Diaz. Clavigero. Robertson.

measuring the power of the monarch by his opulence, and by the order apparent in his government, believed it utter madness to attack such a state with their feeble means. The partisans of Velasques sustained the latter opinion, in which they were greatly strengthened, by the departure of the Mexicans, who had supplied the camp with provisions, and the consternation of the troops at the apparent approach of famine. But the former opinion possessed Cortes himself and the less numerous but bolder spirits of the army. It is possible that the intentions of Cortes when he accepted the command under Velasques were loyal. But minds like his are not formed for exemplars of subordination, and the course of Velasques himself, and of almost every distinguished man in America, did not teach him that fealty and obedience to superiors were the first of virtues. It is more probable, that the Governor detected in his own aspirations, the designs of Cortes, and that his orders to strip him of the command were dictated by prudence, though injudiciously executed.

It cannot be doubted, that from the moment the distrust of Velasques was avowed, and Cortes had resolved to weigh anchor in despite of his prohibition, that the latter had determined to throw off all subordination on the first favorable opportunity. To this end he insinuated himself into the favor of his companions by his affability, by well-timed acts of liberality, by inspiring them with vast hopes, and by allowing them to trade privately with the natives, a measure which had been forbidden by Velasques, who had commanded that whatever might be acquired by trade should be thrown into the common stock.

XXVI. On the withdrawal of the supplies which had hitherto been furnished by the natives and the expression of a resolution on the part of Cortes to

proceed to the port, discovered by Montejo, the adherents of Velasques were emboldened to murmur and cabal against the General. They deputed Diego de Ordaz to remonstrate against a present attempt at colonization, and the measures which Cortes was pursuing to detach the army from its allegiance to the governor of Cuba, and to urge the immediate return to that island, to refit the fleet and augment the number of troops. Ordaz performed his commission with soldierly frankness and assured his commander that he spoke the sentiments of the whole army. But Cortes, who well knew the temper and wishes of his soldiers, and foresaw how they would receive a proposition destructive of all their hopes, listened to their remonstrance with apparent calmness, and carried his dissimulation so far, as to seem to assent to the wishes of the discontented; issuing orders that the army should prepare to embark on the next day for Cuba. His partisans well instructed, tumultuously assembled, and reproached him with having deceived them by asserting that he came with full power and design to establish a colony, when it would appear that he was authorised only to trade. They openly demanded that he should fulfil his original engagement with them, which was alike adapted to the service of God and his majesty; and declared their determination not to relinquish an enterprise that had hitherto been successful; that if he preferred to return to Cuba they would elect another general, and under his command prosecute to an end their glorious undertaking. Cortes affected surprise at these representations, averring that his orders to embark had been issued, solely, from the representation that such was the wish of the whole army and contrary to his own inclination; but, that now convinced of his error and recognising the generous spirit which should animate every true

Spaniard, he would resume his original purpose, and doubted not to lead them to the summit of wealth and glory. This declaration was answered with shouts of joy which seemed unanimous; the disaffected uniting in them that their inclinations might not be suspected by the General, and to avoid the imputation of cowardice from their fellow soldiers.*

XXVII. In order to give full scope to his designs, Cortes assembled the principal persons of his army, and by their suffrage elected a council and magistrates, and established a municipal government similar to the corporations of Spain. The Alcades were, Portecarrero and Montejo; the latter being selected because he had hitherto been a partisan of Velasques. The most important circumstance of this institution was, its establishment solely in the king's name, without reference to Velasques.† The men who thus threw off all dependence upon their superior, naturally cast about at the moment, for means of defending themselves against an accusation of sedition; and they believed, they had found this, in the instructions of the Governor to Cortes, which instead of having for their object, the extension of the power of the Spanish crown, looked solely to the gratification of private avarice. At the instance of the army these instructions were read aloud, and their tenor was, "As soon as you have procured the utmost quantity of gold that can be had, return.‡

At the first meeting of the Council, Cortes, who like all other heroes, save Coriolanus, knew, that lowliness was young ambition's ladder, applied for leave to enter. Approaching the tribunal, with demonstrations of the most profound respect, he artfully observed, that the supreme jurisdiction over the Colony now planted, was vested in them, they representing the sovereign; and it became his duty to address them

* B. Diaz. Solis. Robertson. † B. Diaz. Solis. ‡ B. Diaz,

with the same frankness and fidelity that were due to his royal master, and to inform them that the security of a colony settled in a great empire, whose sovereign was inimical, depended upon arms, and due subordination and discipline among the troops: That his right to command was derived from the Governor of Cuba, and his commission having long since been revoked, the lawfulness of his jurisdiction might be questioned, and that, therefore he resigned into their hands his general's baton, that they, whose right it was, might confer it upon whomsoever they chose: That for himself, such was his zeal for the service in which he was engaged, that, he would cheerfully seize the soldier's pike with the same hand that surrendered the leader's truncheon, and thus convince his fellow soldiers that though accustomed to command, he had not forgotten to obey. Then kissing his truncheon, he delivered it to the magistrates and withdrew.

Having taken due time to deliberate on the weighty subject thus committed to them, the Council accepted his resignation; but, as the uninterrupted tenor of their prosperity under his conduct gave assurances of his ability to command, they by unanimous suffrage, not only appointed him Captain General of the army, but Chief Justice of the colony also; directing his commission to be made out in the king's name, with the most ample powers, to be in force until the royal pleasure should be known. This election was formally communicated to the army, and was ratified by acclamation.*

XXVIII. This grave and plausible farce did not pass without reprobation from the adherents of Velasques; nor were their affections conciliated by the increased state which Cortes assumed, now that he considered himself no longer the deputy of a

* Diaz. Solis. Robertson.

deputy, but, the lieutenant of the King. They openly denounced the proceedings of the Council as illegal, and those of the Army as mutinous. And such was the violence of their invective, that Cortes deeming it necessary to repress it by some rigorous measure, arrested Ordaz, Escadero and Velasques de Leon, the leaders of this faction, and sent them, prisoners in chains, on board the fleet. Their dependents, astonished and overawed, remained submissive, and the General, more desirous to gain over than to punish the prisoners, whose merit as officers he highly appreciated, courted their friendship with such assiduity and address, that the reconciliation was so perfectly cordial, that, they never after upon any occasion deserted him. On this occasion Cortes displayed his admirable powers for command, and though it has been said* that in this as in other negotiations he owed much of his success to the Mexican gold, we would remark that mercenary motives scarcely endure longer than the stimulus is applied, and the zeal and attachment which gold buys are rarely proof against the seductions of resentment, and opportunity for revenge. Cortes had a master mind, and his was the prerogative of strength, the right to subjugate weaker spirits.

XXIX. The union between his army and himself was now indissoluble. If, there were any criminality in his conduct, all the troops with their officers were accessories, and all felt, that their best defence would be the successful termination of their enterprise. He now prepared to quit his camp for the more advantageous position that had been selected, and from thence to seek his way to the interior of the country. And in this he was aided by one of those events whose causes, independent of

* Robertson.

his power, were working the accomplishment of his designs. Some Indians having approached his camp in a mysterious manner, were introduced to his presence. They were messengers sent by the Cacique of Chempoalla, a discontented feudatory of Montezuma, residing in a town twenty-four miles distant, who beheld in the strangers the means of ridding himself from an intolerable yoke. From his conference with these natives a new ray of light and hope broke on the mind of Cortes. He learned that the great empire with which he was about to contend, was wanting in the first requisites of strength, union among the people, and respect for the rulers; and it became extremely probable that he might unite under his standard, a force, which directed by his skill, might prove competent to its destruction. The Chempoallese received a most gracious reception and were dismissed with assurances of aid and protection, and a promise that he would visit their chief on the following day.

XXX. The road to Chiahuitzla, the spot, to which he designed to remove, led by Chempoalla. When he had arrived within three miles of the latter town, twenty of its most respectable inhabitants came forth to meet him with an offering of fruits and flowers, and an apology from their chief, stating that his obesity rendered it inconvenient to meet his visitors on the road. When the Spanish army entered the town they were much gratified with its size and the commodiousness of the buildings, and the soldiers compared it to Seville.* From the Cacique, who poured forth his complaints with tears, Cortes learned, that Montezuma was a haughty, cruel and suspicious tyrant, who treated

* The whole Spanish army was lodged in buildings within the enclosure of the temple here, built either for the accommodation of strangers, or for the ministers of religion. Clavigero, book viii.

his own subjects with arrogance, ruined the conquered countries by his exactions, and tore from the arms of parents their sons and daughters, the former for sacrifice and the latter as concubines for himself and favorites. Cortes repeated his assurances of service, declaring that one of the great objects of the Spaniards in visiting this remote country was to redress grievances and to relieve the oppressed, and having encouraged him to expect his interposition in due time, he resumed his march for Chiahuitzla.

XXXI. This spot appeared to Cortes to have been judiciously chosen, and with the aid of the Indians who volunteered their services and who had to the number of four hundred, carried the baggage of the army from Chempoalla, the new town soon arose, and was surrounded by a sufficient fortification to protect the inhabitants from any dangers they might apprehend from the natives. The General urged forward this work by precept and example, labouring with the same assiduity as the meanest of the people. The town was founded in a plain at the foot of the mountain of Chiahuitzla, twelve miles from Chempoalla to the North and adjoining to the harbor. It received the name of Villa Rica dela Vera Cruz.*

XXXII. Whilst thus engaged Cortes had repeated interviews, with the chiefs of Chempoalla and Chiahuitzla, and inspired them with such con-

* Most historians have supposed that there were in the vicinity two towns only, which bore the name of Vera Cruz; that of which we have above spoken, and the new Vera Cruz, built on the sand where Cortes disembarked. But there have been three places with this name, viz. the one built in 1519, which was afterwards called simply Villa Rica, the second or ancient Vera Cruz, settled in 1523, and the third, the new Vera Cruz, which still preserves the name, founded by the Count of Monterus, viceroy of Mexico, towards the end of the 16th century, and had from Philip III. the title of city given it in 1615.

fidence, that they resolved to resist the Mexican power. But whilst deliberating on the means of releasing themselves from this burdensome yoke, there arrived five Mexican nobles, receivers of the royal tributes, who expressing the utmost indignation against the Totonacas (*Chempoallese,*) for daring to receive these strangers without the royal consent, demanded twenty human victims to be sacrificed to the gods in expiation of the crime. The people, and particularly the two chiefs, who considered themselves most guilty, were greatly disturbed at this demand. Cortes instantly suggested, and finally after much hesitation prevailed upon them, to arrest the receivers and throw them into prison; thereby steeping the rebels so deeply in guilt that pardon became hopeless. Having taken this step, their superstition, similar to that of the Mexicans, and their vengeance induced, them to offer their prisoners to the gods. But Cortes, politically designing to gain friends on either hand by the same means, expressed great horror at this intention, and sending secretly for two of the prisoners, assured them of his great displeasure at the conduct of the Totonacas, and set them at liberty with promises that their companions should soon rejoin them. On the next day he reprimanded with great severity the negligent watch of the guards, and causing the other prisoners to be sent on board the fleet for greater safety, he liberated them also, soon after. The redeemed captives were profuse in their gratitude for these services, and earnestly recommended to Cortes not to trust the faithless Totonacas.

Fear of the resentment of the great Montezuma still weighed on the spirits of the Indian chiefs; and as the monarch must now be early apprised of the treatment of his officers every thing was to be dreaded from his resentment. But, their confi-

dence in the protection of their highly endowed guests grew with the knowledge of their extraordinary qualities, and they resolved to dare the utmost extremity of the tyrant's vengeance under such leaders. The cries of liberty aroused other chieftains of the tribe, all of whom readily placed themselves and their forces under Cortes, and, acknowledged themselves subjects of the king of Castile.*

XXXIII. As subjects of the same monarch the Chempallese chief endeavoured to obtain the services of the Spaniards against his personal enemies; and to this end complained of outrages which he alleged were committed by a garrison of Mexican troops stationed in a town about nine leagues distant; and which Cortes promised to punish. When the troops were ordered on the service, seven soldiers of the party of Velasques refused to march, and insisted on permission to return to their plantations in Cuba. This Cortes did not think proper directly to refuse, and having been severely reprimanded for pusillanimity and insubordination they embarked; but when the vessel was about to sail, the remainder of the troops headed by the Alcade and other civil officers waited on the General, most probably by his connivance, with a request that he would permit no person whatever to quit his colours; a crime for which death was the just and appropriate punishment. He appeared long unwilling to retract his assent, but at length as if influenced merely by the wishes of the army, he directed that the malcontents should be brought back and made to resume their station in the ranks; removing from himself the odium of refusal, and retaining the services and affections of the disappointed warriors. He now set forth upon his pro-

* Solis. Diaz. Clavigero.

posed expedition, with four hundred soldiers, who were joined at Chempoalla by a thousand Indian allies. When he approached the town, toward which he marched, many of its chief inhabitants came forth, and besought him not to destroy those who had in no way offended him, upon the false and malevolent representation of their enemies the Chempallese, who sought to pervert the justice of the Spaniards to the gratification of their own vengeance. They admitted that a Mexican garrison had been in their town, but it had retired on the arrest of the officers of Montezuma. Finding this remonstrance based on truth, Cortes, forbade the advance of the allies who were already plundering the suburbs, and reprehended them for their falsehood, commanded them to restore their prisoners and spoil, and instantly to retrace their steps. This instance of moderation and equity did him more service than a victory. The chiefs, priests and people of the neighbourhood, listened with greedy ears to the religious doctrine of men, who were thus disposed to obey the dictates of justice, and they readily embraced the new faith and professed alliance of the Spaniards. Another act of justice and rigid discipline on the part of Cortes tended strongly to confirm this favorable disposition. Upon his return march, one of the soldiers pillaged a dwelling of some food, upon which Cortes ordered him to be instantly hanged, but his life was saved by Alvarado who cut the rope before strangulation.

XXXIV. In the meantime, the officers whom Cortes had set at liberty arrived at Mexico, and their report of the conduct and praises of the Spanish General, mollified the indignation of Montezuma who was preparing an army to chastise the insolence and temerity of the strangers and to drive them from his dominions. Changing his purpose,

instead of a military force he despatched two of his nephews to Chempoalla, at the head of a retinue of nobles, charged with a present of wrought gold, and the thanks of their master to Cortes; with instructions also to complain, of the encouragement which that commander had given to his rebellious subjects. The ambassadors added, that, it was only from respect to such guests that an army had not now been sent to punish the rebels, whose chastisement, though procrastinated, would eventually be inflicted.* Cortes replied to this message in the most respectful manner, ascribing his alliance with the Totonacas to the desertion of the Mexican officers and his consequent privation of necessary provisions; but he openly defended their refusal to pay further tribute; alleging, that it was impossible for a nation to obey two masters, and that the Totonacas were now, the subjects of the Kings of Spain. He exhibited to the wondering and delighted princes the military exercises of his army, made them some trifling presents and dismissed them greatly gratified with their reception.

XXXV. This unexpected renewal of amical intercourse between the Spaniards and the Mexicans justly filled the Totonacas with alarm, and the more effectually to strengthen his alliance with the former, the Cacique of Chempoalla offered to Cortes eight virgins of his principal families, richly dressed, among whom was one of his own nieces, that they might marry with the Spanish officers. Cortes who had frequently conversed with the Cacique upon the subject of religion availed himself of the present occasion to impress the subject more forcibly upon his attention. He declared that he could not accept these damsels for the purpose for which they were given, unless they first

* Clavigero.

renounced idolatry and embraced the christian faith. He laboured to explain anew the principles of his religion, and to expose in the strongest light the false worship and particularly the horrid sacrifices of the natives. The Chempoaliese very naturally replied, that, however highly he might value the friendship of his guests, he could not sacrifice to that, the piety due to his gods, nor abjure the worship of those deities from whose beneficence his nation received the blessings of health and plenty, and from whose vengeance for deserted altars the severest punishments must flow. The apostolic zeal of the General waxed higher at this answer, and he exclaimed with a fervor which would not have disgraced the most devoted crusader, nor even Caled the Ottomite, the *sword of god*, “Come on soldiers; for what do we wait? Shall we suffer men who claim to be our friends to render that homage to stocks and stones, which is due only to the living God? Forward, soldiers of the Cross! Now is the the time to show ourselves Spaniards, who have inherited their ancestor’s zeal for our holy faith. Down with the idols and remove from the heathen, these incentives to superstition. We shall thus render to our God the greatest service in our power, and if we perish in the attempt, he will recompense us with eternal glory.”

The Chempoaliese chief, who gathered Cortes’ design from his features and gesture, commanded his subjects to protect their idols; but perceiving that the Spanish soldiers, not less zealous than their commander, had gained the steps of the temple, he endeavoured to dissuade them from their purpose by threats of the vengeance of his gods; but, Cortes mocked at his vain denunciations, and, assured him, if the Indians did not themselves resolve to take away these detestable images, the Spaniards would destroy them and would thenceforth re-

nounce the friendship of idolators, and in case of resistance, would sweep them from the face of the earth. To this threat, Marina added another not less efficacious, that the strangers would unite with the Mexicans and aid them to re-establish their former dominion.

The Cacique overwhelmed by these denunciations, permitted the Spaniards to do as they thought proper, whilst himself, his priests and his people, hid their streaming eyes that they might not witness the profanation, and secretly prayed that they might not be visited with punishment for the temerity of the stranger. A few brave and pious men, however, prepared to avenge the violated shrines; from which they were deterred, only, by the seizure of the Cacique and chief priests, on the part of the Spaniards, who threatened them with death in case of violence. The idols were cast from the temples and the astounded priests were compelled to collect and burn the fragments. The temples were purified, the altars cleansed, and the comely image of Mary the mother of God, filled the fane, which monstrous forms had lately dishonoured. The care of the sanctuary was committed to four Chempallese priests, whose gory locks were shorn and whose black garments, emblematical of their former lugubrious office, were exchanged for shining white; and that this temple might never again be abused, an old and useless soldier was established therein, in the character of a holy hermit. The eight virgins, too, having been previously qualified by appropriate instruction and the sacrament of baptism, were distributed, for the solace of the principal Spanish officers.*

XXXVI. Upon the return of Cortes to Villa Rica he found a vessel in the harbour from Cuba,

* Bernal Diaz. Solis. Clavigero.

having on board an able officer with ten men and two horses, whom he added to his army. The news which this vessel brought of the favor Velasques enjoyed at court, and of his having received the commission of Adelantado of Cuba, gave new spirits to the Governor's faction in the army, and much disquietude to the General.* He had now been three months in New Spain, in which every moment had been actively employed in laying the foundation of his future success. But his position was doubtful and precarious. His commission so irregularly obtained, might be wrested from him by his powerful enemy, and himself be subjected to severe punishment. Yet he did not despond, but, hastened, before setting out for Mexico, to lay before the king the most favorable views of his conduct and success and to interpose the acts of the colony as a shield between himself and the impending danger. In their memorial to the king the magistrates endeavoured to detract from the merit of Velasques in fitting out the former armaments under Cordova and Grijalva; affirming that they had been equipped by the adventurers engaged in the expedition, and not by the Governor. They concluded that the sole object of Velasques was to trade with the natives, not to attempt the conquest or colonization of the country; they asserted the present armament had been fitted out at the expense of Cortes and the officers under him; and they therefore humbly requested their sovereign to ratify what they had done in his name, and to confirm Cortes in the supreme command by his royal commission. That Charles might be induced more readily to grant what, they demanded, they gave him a pompous description of the country, its wealth and population, civilization and arts,

* Bernal Diaz. Solis. Clavigero.

narrated the progress they had already made in annexing a part of the sea coast to the crown of Castile, and detailed the plans they had formed for reducing the whole to subjection. Cortes himself wrote in a similar strain; and as he knew that the Spanish Court, accustomed to the exaggerated description of every new country by its discoverers, would give very little credit to their splendid accounts of New Spain, if unaccompanied by satisfactory testimonials of its opulence, he solicited his soldiers to relinquish their share of the treasure which had been already collected, in order that the whole might be sent to the King. Such was the ascendant he had over their minds, and such their romantic expectation of future wealth, that an army of indigent and rapacious adventurers, offered to their sovereign the richest present that had hitherto been transmitted from the New World. Portecarrero and Montejo, the chief magistrates of the colony, were appointed to carry this present to Castile, with express orders not to touch at Cuba, in their passage thither.*

XXXVII. Within four days after the departure of their agents, the colony was much agitated by an unexpected event. Some soldiers and sailors, secretly attached to Velasques, or intimidated at the prospect of the danger attendant on their enterprise, conspired to seize a brigantine and make their escape to Cuba, in order to give the Governor such intelligence as might enable him to intercept the ship bearing the treasure and despatches to Spain. Although the persons ostensibly engaged in this conspiracy were of low rank, they were encouraged by others of greater consideration; but when ready for execution, the plot was betrayed by one of the associates.† The confederates were seized, and having

* Solis. B. Diaz. Robt. Clavigero.

† B. Diaz. Robt.

confessed their guilt, were rigorously punished, the most criminal being hanged.

XXXVIII. This event filled the mind of Cortes with disquietude. He perceived that disaffection lurked among his troops, that, some of his men, weary of the service, longed to revisit their quiet plantations in Cuba, and he apprehended that on the appearance of extraordinary danger, or any reverse of fortune, it would be impossible to prevent them from returning thither. His force already too feeble, could bear no diminution; and a small defection of his followers might compel him to abandon the expedition. Reflection on these particulars induced him to believe, that, his greatest chance of success existed, in depriving his army of the means of retreat, and reducing the men to the necessity of adopting the resolution, to conquer or perish. The means of effecting this he probably adopted from the example of Badajos, who when despatched by Pedrarias across the Isthmus to the South Sea, finding his troops discouraged from proceeding by the whitening bones of the followers of Nicuessa, which strewed the shore, produced a state of desperate courage by sending away the vessel which had brought them.* Cortes resolved to destroy his fleet; but he dared not execute such a resolution by his own authority, and was compelled to induce the army to assent to the measure. His address in accomplishing that purpose was equal to the occasion. He persuaded some, that the ships had suffered so much as to be unfit for service; to others he remarked the seasonable reinforcement of strength that might be derived from the hundred sailors, now unprofitably employed; and to all he represented the necessity of fixing their regards solely upon their enterprise, firmly rejecting every thought of

* See Vol. 2. p. 100.

retreat. With universal consent, the ships were therefore stripped of their sails, rigging, iron works and whatever else might be of use, and sunk in the harbour. The resolution of the General is not so much to be admired on this occasion, as his address in procuring it not only to be adopted by his army, but in giving it the appearance of an original proposition of the soldiers: For the least gage which a nobly ambitious man sets on the cast of fortune, is his life, whilst the vulgar deem the permission to breathe worth all other gifts of fate. But, that magnanimity was truly astonishing and almost unparalleled, which induced five hundred men voluntarily to shut themselves up in a hostile country, filled with powerful and unknown nations; and having precluded every means of escape, left them without any resource but their own valor and perseverance.* The valiant old soldier, Bernal Diaz, says that in reply to an address of Cortes on this occasion, "We one and all exclaimed that we were prepared to obey him, that the lot was now cast, let fortune take what turn she would, as Cæsar said in passing the Rubicon, for that all our services were devoted to God and his majesty."[†]

XXXIX. The army had removed to Chempoalla, preparatory to setting out for Mexico; but when about to march for the latter, a courier arrived from Escalante, with intelligence that a strange vessel was at anchor in a river three leagues distant from Villa Rica, and that he could obtain no answer to his signals from those on board. Cortes committing the command of the army to Alvarado and Sandoval, hastened immediately to the new city; and thence, declining the offer of its Governor to attempt to board the vessel, whilst he took some repose, using a homely but expressive Spanish pro-

* Diaz, Solis, Robt. Clavigero, Herrera. † p. 86.

verb,* he proceeded, even without taking food, along the coast. On his way he fell in with four Spaniards who had been sent on shore by the captain of the vessel, Alonzo Alvares de Pineda, for the purpose of taking possession of the country. One of these, was a notary and the others attended him as witnesses. From them Cortes learned, that Francis de Garay, Governor of Jamaica, had obtained a commission of Adelantado, and Governor of such countries as he should discover on that coast, northward of the river of St. Peter and St. Paul; by virtue of which he had sent three ships, and two hundred and seventy soldiers, under the captain above named, who was then in the river Panuco. Cortes treated these men with much kindness, and succeeded in attaching them to his interest, and seducing them to assist him to gain the vessel. But the officers could not be tempted to approach the land, the captain, being aware that Cortes was on the coast, and suspecting when his boat did not come off, that his men had been discovered. Cortes resorted to stratagem, leaving four of his soldiers dressed in the clothes of the boat's crew, whilst he ostentatiously with the remainder retraced his steps along the shore, but returning at midnight to the position he had left. Early in the morning the disguised soldiers went down to the shore, and at their signal a boat put off from the vessel with six men, two of whom landed with casks for water. The soldiers in order to prevent discovery as long as possible, stooped under pretence of washing their faces; but one of them incautiously answering the hail from the boat, his strange voice gave alarm, and it returned to the ship. Cortes succeeded however in obtaining six recruits, at the expense of sixty hours priva-

* Anglie. "The lame goat takes no afternoon's nap."

tion of food and rest, but he also relieved himself from the apprehension that the vessel contained emissaries of Velasques. Of the rival pretensions of De Garay, he was wholly regardless.

CHAPTER III.

I Cortes departs from Chempoalla....II. Passes through Xocotla—Interview with Olintetl, its Governor....III. Sends ambassadors to Tlascala, visits Ixtacmaxtitlan....IV. Reception of the ambassadors....V. Debate of the Tlascalan Senate....VI. Perfidious resolution of the Senate—Combats with the Tlascalan forces....VII. Treaty of peace with Tlascala....VIII. Reception of the Spaniards in Tlascala....IX. Transactions at Tlascala....X. The army prepares to proceed to Cholula....XI. New embassy from Montezuma....XII. Arrival of the Spaniards at Cholula—perfidy and slaughter of the Inhabitants....XIII. Hypocrisy of Montezuma....XIV. The Mexican troops combat with Escalante—His Death....XV. Cortes resumes his march for Mexico—Avoids an ambuscade in the mountains....XVI. The Spaniards obtain their first view of the Vale of Mexico....XVII. Consternation of Montezuma....XVIII. Cortes visits the towns of Amaquemecan, Tlalmanalco, &c....XIX. Receives the King of Tezcuco at Ajotzinco....XX. Description of Cuitalhuac....XXI. Cortes visits Tezcuco....XXII. Description of Iztapalapan....XXIII. Continuance of the march to Mexico over the lake....XXIV. Interview between Cortes and Montezuma....XXV. Cortes enters Mexico—Description of his quarters.

I. Cortes began his march from Chempoalla, on the 16th of August, with four hundred and fifteen Spanish infantry, sixteen horses and six field pieces. The rest of the troops, consisting chiefly of such as from age or infirmity were least fit for active ser-

vice, he left to garrison Villa Rica, under the command of Escalante, an officer of merit, warmly attached to his interest. The Cacique of Chempoalla supplied him with provisions and two hundred *Tlamama** or porters, who greatly relieved the soldiers in transporting the baggage and artillery. The friendly Caciques offered him a considerable body of warriors; but he contented himself with four hundred, taking care to include among them, persons of note, as hostages for the good faith of their nation. By the advice of the Totonacas, he directed his course for Tlascala; whose enmity to the Mexicans, and alliance with the Chempoallese, rendered a favorable reception of the Spaniards highly probable.

II. Passing through Xalapa and Texotla, and crossing with much fatigue some desert mountains, whose severe and chilling temperature was probably unexpected in the Torrid Zone, the army arrived at Xocotla, a town containing some beautiful buildings, among which, rose no less than thirteen temples. The palace of the Governor was built of stone cemented with lime, comprising several large halls and many chambers, being the most finished specimen of architecture the Spaniards had seen in the New World. Montezuma, possessed in this city and its neighbouring hamlets, twenty thousand vassals, whose allegiance was assured by a Mexican garrison five thousand strong. The Governor *Olintell* came forth to meet the advancing army, but the reception he gave it was cold and repulsive, and the scanty food and wretched lodging supplied to his unbidden guests betrayed the unwelcomeness of their visit. Cortes prudently repressed every symptom of dissatisfaction in himself and his soldiers. But as their qualities be-

* Not *Tamenes*, as Robertson writes after Solis.

came better known to their host, his respect for them increased, and his attentions became more liberal. The interviews with this Cacique tended greatly to inflame the animating passions of the Spaniards, the desire of wealth and the love of glory. "Are you," said the Spaniard to the Indian, hoping to hear from him the like complaints, as from others, "Are you, a subject of Montezuma?" "Am I the subject of Montezuma?" echoed the chief, with an air of real or well feigned surprise. "In what part of the earth is there a man that is not the vassal and the slave of that great monarch?" Cortes replied, that, it was certain he knew little of the world, since, himself and his companions were the vassals of another king, so powerful that he had many subjects, who were, greater princes than Montezuma. Unrestrained by this remark, the Cacique launched forth in the most rapturous praises of his master's greatness. He dwelt upon the extent of the country over which he ruled, the splendor of his capital city, impregnably situated in an extensive lake—the vastness of his wealth, and the power of his armies—and above all, on the wretchedness of those who ventured to resist or disobey him, of whom not less than twenty thousand annually poured forth their lives before the altars of his gods. Cortes was not unconcerned at this exposition of the power of the Mexican sovereign, but he spiritedly replied, "that he was already sufficiently informed of the greatness of Montezuma—that his embassy to that prince was of a pacific nature, and that the warriors who accompanied him were more the attendants of his state, than the agents of conquest: But though he desired peace he was fully prepared for war, and the meanest of his soldiers was equal to a host of the Mexican king: That he never drew the sword without just provocation, but when once drawn he

would wield it amid blood and fire, whilst an enemy presumed to resist him: 'That nature waited upon him with her prodigies, and even heaven lent him its lightning, since in its holy cause he sought to extirpate the vices of the Indians and the errors of their religion, even those very sacrifices of human victims, which were boasted as the greatness of his king.' Then turning to his troops, who witnessed the interview. 'So!' he cried, 'Comrades, is not this what we seek; great difficulties and great riches? The one gives us fame and the other fortune.'* *Olintetl*, though solicited, refused to give the Spaniards any gold, without the express orders of his prince; but this unquenchable thirst, was in a small measure, momentarily allayed, by some valuable presents from other chiefs who visited their camp. *Olintetl* earnestly endeavoured to persuade Cortes to take the route by Cholula to Mexico instead of proceeding by Tlascala. Had he adopted this advice he would have fallen into an ambush which might have proved fatal to his expedition.†

III. Cortes had been fully instructed in the warlike and independent character of the Tlascalans, and deemed it prudent, to avoid any misunderstanding with them, by respectfully requesting permission to pass through their territories. For this purpose, he despatched an embassy of four Chempoallans, and following his ambassadors, proceeded with his army to *Ixtacmaxtitlan*, whose population extended for ten or twelve miles in uninterrupted lines of dwellings, upon the opposite banks of a small river, which drains a long and narrow valley. A city of that name inhabited by six thousand souls occupied the summit of a lofty and steep mountain, whose natural strength was so improved by walls and ditches, that the Spaniards compared it with

* B. Diaz. Solis

† Clavigero.

the best fortifications in Spain. The choice of the position and the mural defences were dictated by the vicinity of the hostile Tlascalans.

IV. In the mean time, the Totonacan ambassadors had arrived at Tlascala, carefully clad in the costume of their office, having over their shoulders a cotton mantle twisted and knotted at the extremities, and in the right hand a long arrow, fledged with *white feathers* emblematic of peace.* On the succeeding day they were led to the Senate, assembled in a large hall, whose members, arranged according to their age, were seated upon low stools, of precious wood, made of a single block. They entered the hall with their arrows raised, and the hoods of their mantles drawn over their heads, and advancing slowly into the centre of the hall, sunk upon their knees and awaited permission to speak: This being granted, the oldest, seating himself on his heels, addressed the Senate in a full clear voice. "Noble Republic, valiant and powerful Tlascalans, the lord of Chempoalla and the Caciques of the mountains, your friends and allies salute you! They wish you fruitful harvests and the destruction of your enemies! We are commissioned to inform you, that there have arrived in this land, from the country where the sun rises, a race of invincible men, who seem like gods; who navigate the ocean in floating palaces, and whose arms are the thunder and lightning of the heavens. They worship Gods superior to ours, to whom every species of tyranny and every sacrifice of human victims is an abomination. The commander of these extraordinary men is the ambassador of a very powerful prince,

* When the mission was denunciatory of war the feathers of the arrow were red. The learned reader will recognise in these officers the substitute for the *Feciales* and the *Caduceatores* of the Romans; the former, the denunciators of war; the latter the messengers of peace.

who, impelled by his religion seeks to remedy the abuses in our country, and to restrain the excesses of Montezuma. Already has he restored our nation to freedom; and, being obliged to pass through your republic towards Mexico, he seeks to know in what that tyrant may have offended you, that he may make your cause his own. With this information of his designs and experience of his benignity, we beseech and admonish you on the part of our Caciques and their confederation, to receive these strangers as the benefactors and associates of your allies. And on the part of the foreign leader, we are instructed to say, that, he visits you in peace, and asks, only, permission to pass uninterrupted through your states.” Having thus delivered their message, the four rose from their knees and with a low reverence departed, to await in their lodgings the reply of the Senate.

V. The Tlascalan confederacy was at this time governed by Maxicatzin, the General-in-chief, Tlekul, Xolitzin, and Citlalpocatzin; who replied, that they were grateful for the information and counsel of the Totonacas; but that the demand of the strangers required mature consideration, before it was answered. In the debate of the Senate which ensued, Maxicatzin, called to the remembrance of his auditors, the tradition which had descended from their remotest ancestors, and which was entertained as a part of their religious faith; predicting that there should come from the regions of the East, an invincible race, with such dominion over the elements, that they would build floating towns upon the great deep, and compel the fire and the air to aid them in subjecting the earth: That, though he did not, like the vulgar, believe these to be living gods, yet that tradition taught them to expect celestial men so courageous that one would be an overmatch for a thousand, yet so be-

nignant that, they would require them to live only by the rules of reason and justice. "Every thing," he continued, "announces, that these visitors come to fulfil the prediction. The earthquakes which have lately shaken our towns, the comet which now wanders through the heavens, and the evidences which accompany the strangers all prove that the promised hour is at hand; and I, therefore, counsel, that we grant his request, lest his just resentment prove fatal to our nation."

This course was, however, strenuously opposed by *Xicotencatl*, an ancient chieftain, who by reason of his long experience in civil and religious offices, possessed great influence in the Senate. "Our law," he said, "enjoins us to receive strangers but not enemies. The men who have appeared on our shores seem more like monsters cast up by the sea, which could no longer endure them, than gods from heaven. Are gods thus covetous of gold and debasing pleasures? If they be, should we not dread their presence in a country, which like ours, is so poor as to be destitute even of salt? But, if they be mortal, he wrongs us, who bids us dread a handful of needy adventurers. If they be mortal, our arms will tell it to the surrounding nations; but if they are indeed of celestial origin, there will be always time to appease their anger by homage, and to implore their mercy by repentance. I advise, therefore, that their demand be rejected; and should they attempt to enter by force, that we chastise their temerity."

VI. The Senate was much divided by these oppugnant counsels, until a third speaker suggested a middle course, by which the odium of refusing the requested permission might be avoided, and the strength and character of the strangers fully developed. "Send," said he, "a friendly answer, let them enter our territories, but, give order to *Xicotencatl*, (*the son of the aged chieftain*,) that, with

the Otomite mercenaries, he oppose their passage and try their strength. If we be conquerors, our name will be immortal; if we be vanquished, we will charge the Otomites with having made war without our knowledge and against our consent."* This perfidious counsel was adopted, most probably from the conviction, that the professions of Cortes, who was marching amicably to the Mexican Court, were insincere. The Chempoallese were detained until the army was in motion, that they might not give information of its advance. Cortes having waited eight days for the return of his messengers, imagining, that their delay proceeded solely from the deliberations consequent on the form of government of the Tlascalans, at length set out,† having his force augmented by the *Mexican* garrison of Xocotla.‡ In his march he came to the famous wall built by the Tlascalans to defend their eastern frontiers from the approach of the Mexicans.§ The entrance, so capable of defence, was unguarded, and the Spanish troops marched unimpeded through one of the most dangerous passes of the country. Some armed Indians appeared in the distance, hastening probably to this deserted post. They gave battle to a small detachment of cavalry, which moving in advance of the army, had galloped forward to ascertain the determination of the Senate. Two horses were killed in this encounter

* Solis. Clavigero. † 30 August, 1520.

‡ There is much diversity among historians relative to this embassy to the Tlascalans, and the proceedings of that nation consequent upon it. Solis and Clavigero say the number of ambassadors was four; B. Diaz and Robertson, two, and that preparations were made to sacrifice them, from which fate B. Diaz says that they made their escape. It is most probable that the Tlascalans were apprized of Mexican troops being with the Spaniards, and were apprehensive of deceit, and willing to punish, by fright at least, the emissaries of those who wittingly or unwittingly, might be aiding in the deception.

§ See vol. 3. p. 289.

and three others and two men wounded. A loss most sensibly felt in so small a squadron, and which the Spaniards deemed uncompensated by the lives of fifty Otomies, whom they slew in the encounter. After this skirmish, Cortes halted for the night. Soon, after resuming his march on the next morning, he was assailed by a thousand Tlascalans, who in despite of his pacific remonstrances, and of a formal protest made by a notary, of his peaceable designs, continued to gall his march. When pressed, the enemy retired, drawing on the invaders to steep and broken ground, impracticable for cavalry, where the main body of the Indians were advantageously posted.* A very perilous encounter here was concluded by the Spaniards regaining the plain and routing their foes with considerable loss, having fifteen wounded with one killed on their part. A fierce combat between one of the late ambassadors and a gigantic Tlascalan, in which the former prevailed by killing his enemy, is recorded with commendations of Chempoallese valor, by the Spanish historians.

Cortes encamped upon a commanding hill where he erected huts for his troops, which he surrounded with entrenchments. Here, he remained, until he had established a firm peace with the Tlascalans. From this position, he sent out detachments to reconnoitre the country, who set fire to several hamlets and captured many prisoners. The latter were liberated and made the bearers of pacific proposals to the Senate. Some, joining the Tlascalan army under Xicotencatl, communicating to him their message, he bade them return and inform the Spanish General, that if he desired peace, he must seek it in the capital, where he and his army would be

* The Indian force on this occasion is variously enumerated. Cortes says, 100,000; Bernal Diaz, 40,000; others, 30,000; all, perhaps, much exaggerated.

sacrificed to the gods, and their bodies made food for the conquerors. This threat and a minute description of the enemy's force, reported one hundred and fifty thousand strong, had a serious effect upon the Spanish soldiers, already much harrassed by fatigue; and they spent the night in the solemn act of confession, that they might more safely meet the dangers of the ensuing day.

On the following morning* the Tlascalan army approached, not less terrible from its numbers, than beautiful from its plumes, party-coloured standards and other military ornaments which waved and gleamed over the field. It was divided into divisions, each of eight thousand men. In the rear guard, according to custom, was placed the banner of the republic, a golden eagle with outspread wings. With a *barbaric* and scornful generosity, Xicotencatl sent to his foes a large supply of provisions, of which he had learned they stood in need, consisting of three hundred turkeys and two hundred baskets of *Tamalli*, or Indian bread, bidding them eat and be strong, that he shamed to fight an enemy already more than half conquered by famine. Having allowed them time for their meal he despatched two thousand men to assail their camp; and the rest of his army advanced to their support, who, made the attack with great impetuosity, forced the entrenchments and engaged hand to hand with the Spanish swordsmen. Notwithstanding the disparity of weapons, victory might have crowned the brave efforts of the Tlascalans, had union been preserved among their forces. But the arrogance of Xicotencatl was equally offensive to friends and foes. Having grossly insulted the chief of a large portion of his troops, and refusing him the satisfaction of single combat which the other claimed, the in-

* 15th of September.

jured officer withdrew his troops from the field, when the Spaniards overwhelmed by numbers and wearied by their own exertions, were almost disabled from continuing the combat. This defection became contagious, and the impetuous Tlascalan General was compelled to retreat at the very moment that victory hovered over his standard. In this as in almost every other battle, between the Europeans and Indians, the loss of the respective parties was proportioned not to the numerical force but to the efficiency of weapons. The *escaupil* or cotton mail, yielded protection equal to steel, against arrows and spears headed with flint, and the Spanish buckler easily turned aside staves hardened in the fire, or pointed occasionally with copper, and broke the force of the more dangerous weapon the *maquahuitl*, or sword edged with *itzli*. But the cross bow, the arquebuse and the cannon, became tenfold more destructive from the dense masses of the Indian army, and the sharp Toledo blade passed easily through the body of the naked foe. The Spaniards had only one man killed, but sixty with all the horses were wounded, in the fiercely contested and protracted combat, whilst the havoc of the Tlascalans was enormously great. The number however, could not be ascertained, as the instant a warrior fell he was removed from the field; and these efforts of pride or humanity, tended greatly to distract the attention of the troops and to enfeeble their operations.

After this battle Cortes employed part of his force in foraging, whilst he awaited the reply to the reiteration of his proposals for peace. Notwithstanding their misfortunes, the majority of the Senate was indisposed to treat; yet the opinion began to prevail, that the Spaniards, if not gods, were of a supernatural race, and the Senators rationally required of the priesthood, the means most effectually

to check their superhuman power. This oracle unhesitatingly replied, that the visitors were neither immortal nor invincible; that being children of the sun, they were protected by their progenitor during the day; but that, with the departure of his rays their strength forsook them, and they became incapable of defence. Orders, therefore, were instantly despatched to Xicotencatl to make a night attack on the Spanish camp. In the execution of this command, the Tlascalan General showed no want of ability. To learn the position and defences of his enemies he sent fifty spies laden with provisions, and some other inconsiderable presents, bearing also, a pacific message. These messengers strolled for a while unregarded through the camp, their curiosity being supposed such as was natural to the occasion only. But the Totonacas soon observed, that the survey was remarkably close and particular, and communicated their suspicions, that the message was delusive, and that an extraordinary attack might be expected. Cortes immediately ordered the arrest of all the messengers and putting some to the torture, and threatening others, he obtained information of the Tlascalan's plan. Having hitherto discharged all his prisoners unharmed, without any apparent good effect on the disposition of his adversaries, the General now deemed an act of severity indispensable. The lives of his present captives were forfeited by the acknowledged laws of war, and any punishment short of death was deemed permissible. He, therefore, directed that the hands of seventeen, and the thumbs of the others should be cut off; and he despatched them in this miserable and bleeding condition to inform their commander, that he was prepared for, and awaited his approach. The troops were immediately put under arms, and at night, bells having been affixed to the breast plates

of the horses, they marched to meet the advancing enemy. The lamentable spectacle of the mutilated spies and the unwonted sounds of the bells, connected with the surprise at finding the foe, whom they expected to see deprived of all power, more active and terrible during the night than during the day, dismayed the Tlascalans and they dispersed and fled despite of every effort of their brave but obstinate leader to bring them into action.* The priests who had recommended a night attack, a measure wholly at variance with the established customs of the nation, fell victims to their presumption and expiated on the altar, their error in discovering the will of the gods.

VII. These repeated disasters abated the national fierceness, and the people and their princes became sincerely desirous of peace. But they were at a loss in what manner to address the strangers; whether as beings of a gentle or malevolent nature. Their amazing lenity in dismissing their prisoners, not only unhurt, but often with presents, indicated the first, but the severity exercised on the unfortunate spies seemed of the last. At length, four aged and venerable men appeared at the Spanish camp, attended by many persons bearing a present of fowls and fruits, several old female slaves wretchedly clad, some incense and a quantity of parrot feathers. "If," said they, addressing Cor-

* The account given by B. Diaz, and by Solis, in relation to this night attack, and the mutilation of the spies appears confused and erroneous. They speak of two projected attacks by night, one of which, the first, was actually made upon the camp and without notice, and the other, was defeated after the knowledge of the design had been extorted from the spies. It is not probable that after the dispersion of the army in the first night engagement, and the discovery that the Spaniards did not lose their courage and vigour with the sun, that the Tlascalans made a second hopeless attack: We have therefore followed Clavigero in our narrative, his account being the most connected and consistent.

tes and his companions, “you are divinities of a cruel and savage nature, we present you these slaves, that you may eat their flesh and drink their blood—If your nature be immortal and beneficent, we offer you this incense and those plumes. If ye be men, lo! here is bread and meat and fruit to nourish you.” Peace was now speedily concluded. The Tlascalans yielded themselves vassals to the crown of Spain, and engaged to assist Cortes in all his future operations, and in return, he promised to defend the Republic from all violence.*

This treaty was seasonably established for the Spaniards. The fatigue of service in which half the army was on duty every night, whilst the other half slept on their arms; the wounds which many of the soldiers had received; the diseases of the climate of which many had died; the scarcity of food notwithstanding the supplies from the friendly Indians; the want of hospital stores which compelled them to make their salves of the fat of the slain Indians, all made a burden so oppressive, that many of the stoutest veterans began to murmur, to look upon the future with dread, and to chide that folly which had consented to deprive them of their ships, by which they might have retreated from such unequal conflicts and imminent dangers. It required the utmost exertion of Cortes’ authority and address to check this spirit of despondence and to re-animate his followers with their wonted sense of superiority over the enemies with whom they had to contend. The submission of the Tlascalans, and their own triumphant entry into the capital city, where they were received with the reverence paid to beings of a superior order, banished at once from the minds of the adventurers all memory of past sufferings, and evil bodings

* Robertson. Solia. Clavigero.

of the future; fully satisfying them, that there was not now, any power in America able to withstand their arms.*

VIII. But the peace with Tlascala was very distasteful to the Mexicans, whose emissaries earnestly remonstrated with Cortes on his easy credulity, which could confide in men who had treacherously assailed him, after having invited him to enter their country. They contrasted this conduct with the kindness and good faith of the Mexicans, and sought further to conciliate the Spaniard by new and valuable presents; earnestly beseeching him not to enter the Tlascalan territory, where he might be more securely and more effectually assailed. The General treated this warning lightly, and it was indeed wholly unwarranted. For, from the moment of pacification the Tlascalans remained the most faithful and attached allies of the Spaniards, and most joyfully offered to put the whole of their military force under the command of Cortes, to accompany him to the Court of Mexico. But this alliance was not the only fruit the Spaniards reaped from their victories. In the same camp where he received the Tlascalan ambassadors, he was visited by deputies from the Republic of Huexotzinco, another enemy to Montezuma, and from the insurgent prince of Acolhuacan, Ixtlilxochitl, to congratulate him on his late successes, to offer him their alliance and to invite him to their respective countries. When Cortes understood the rank, pretension and power of the prince, he eagerly accepted his proffered friendship. The reception of the Spaniards in the capital of Tlascala on the 23d of September 1519, was attended with great splendor. Triumphal arches adorned with garlands of flowers, were erected by the inhabitants in all the

* Solis. Bernal Diaz. Robertson.

streets, and their progress was cheered by the shouts of more than one hundred thousand spectators, mingled with the noises of their rude instruments of music. Tlascala was at this time one of the most considerable cities of Anahuac. In grandeur, population, buildings and abundance of the necessities of life, by the testimony of Cortes himself, it exceeded Granada when wrested from the Moors. The Republic by a census taken, at the request of the Spanish General, contained upwards of fifty thousand dwellings and more than five hundred thousand inhabitants.

IX. During his stay at Tlascala, Cortes received from its chiefs full and particular information relative to the state of the Mexican empire and the qualities of its sovereign. He found, not only the enmity of his new allies towards the Mexicans, as great as it was represented, but that the discontent of the subject nations had not been exaggerated; and his confidence of success in a final contest with the Mexican power was confirmed. The respect and veneration of the Tlascalans for their guests, grew stronger as their new and extraordinary qualities were displayed, and unable to conceive that such powers could pertain to mortals, they also fancied the Spaniards to be of heavenly origin. Hence, the chief Maxicatzin, expressed to Cortes his surprise, that, being gods, they seemed to recognise a superior deity, before whom they daily exhibited the ceremonies of sacrifice, yet offered no victim; adding, he did not perceive that they had any thing to offer, unless, it were some one member of their company, for the safety of the whole. The piety of Cortes instantly seized this favorable occasion to proclaim and extend his holy faith. He disavowed, for himself and his followers, all pretensions to superhuman powers; yet though not gods, he said, they were invincible, for, being born

in a favorable climate, they possessed greater courage and greater force than other men, and that they recognised no superior save the great ruler of the universe, and their king, who was the greatest sovereign upon earth; among whose subjects he would rank the Tlascalans, since being brothers of the Spaniards, they would not hesitate to obey the same sovereign.

When assured of the humanity of his guests, the gratified chieftain sought to bind them more closely to his nation by human ties; and like the Chemopallese offered them several virgins of the most distinguished families of the nation. These Cortes at first declined, under pretence that the christian law forbade polygamy, and particularly any connection with women who were heathens. But at length, he accepted five damsels, who, being baptized, were distributed among his chief officers.* The Tlascalans willingly submitted to be considered the vassals of a great and distant monarch, whose authority they might suppose themselves able to limit; but they firmly refused to abandon the religion they had inherited from their fathers. They granted the superior nature of the God of the Spaniards, "But," said Maxicatzin, "Our god *Camaxtl* gives us victory over our enemies; our goddess *Matlalcueje* sends rain to our fields and protects us from the inundations of the river Zahapan: To each of our gods we are indebted for some part of the happiness of our lives, and their anger might draw down upon the state the most severe punishment; and many gods are indispensable,

* From these marriages, some of the principal families of Mexico descended. The daughter of the elder Xicotencatl, who received at the baptismal font, the name of Donna Louisa, was given to Alvarado. By her, he had two children, a son called Don Pedro, and a daughter Leonora, who married a cousin of the Duke of Albuquerque.

since, it is not possible that one should extend his care over all things." The ardent and intemperate zeal of Cortes was stimulated by this rejection, and he prepared to treat the idols of Tlascala as he had done those of Chempoalla. But Father Olmedo and others dissuaded him from the rash attempt; representing the imprudence of goading to phrensy the superstition of a brave and warlike people, who under more judicious measures would become the most powerful allies. History gladly records the truly christian protest of this venerable father, who not only opposed the violence of the General upon this occasion, but, declared his disapprobation of that used at Chempoalla, as alike impolitic and unjust, and repugnant to the true faith, which sought converts, not by force and arms, but by enlightening the understanding with patient instruction, and captivating the heart by pious example. Reproved by these counsels, Cortes confined himself to expostulation against the cruelty of human sacrifices; and he so far prevailed with the chiefs and priests, that they consented, to open their prisons and liberate the captives and slaves destined to expiate on the altar the sins of the nation.

Whilst thus offering to the Spaniards the most satisfactory testimonials of respect and confidence, the Tlascalan chiefs beheld with regret in the strict military discipline of the Spanish army, that these sentiments were not mutual, and they earnestly remonstrated against the distrust which it evinced. But Cortes succeeded so well in satisfying the Senate, that, this was habitual with his countrymen, and so indispensably necessary to the efficiency of the army, that they proposed to introduce the practice among their own troops.

X. After twenty days delay the army resumed

its march for Mexico.* The Mexican ambassadors who had remained with Cortes all this time, proposed that he should pass by Cholula, where a proper reception had been prepared for him. The Tlascalans remonstrating against this route, and denouncing the perfidy of the Cholulans, advised him to proceed through Huexotzinco, where he would assuredly find friends and allies. Cortes adopted the first proposition, that he might at once gratify Montezuma, and display to the Tlascalans his contempt of danger.

The Tlascalans and Cholulans had once been united by a strict alliance, prompted alike by their forms of government, and resistance to the Mexican power. But they were now inveterate foes; the latter having most treacherously deserted the former, in a set battle with their common enemies, and attacked the Tlascalan rear whilst the front was engaged with the Mexicans. The Tlascalans eagerly sought an opportunity for vengeance, and would gladly have turned upon their enemies the indignation of the Spaniards. They endeavoured, therefore, to prejudice the mind of Cortes against this Republic, representing its delay to send an embassy to the Spanish camp, as full evidence of its hostility; which they corroborated by repeating a message they had received from the Cholulans, reproaching them for their alliance with the Spaniards, and threatening them, should they attempt any thing against their sacred city, with destruction by an overwhelming flood: For, they professed to believe, that they could by razing the walls of the sanctuary of Quetzalcoatl, cause such copious rivers to spring from them, as would in a moment overflow the city. The Tlascalans had full faith in the power of the Cholulans to perform

* October 13.

this miracle; yet, their desire of vengeance overcame their dread of danger.* Moved by these suggestions, Cortes despatched four noble Tlascalans to Cholula, to demand, why the Governors of that city had not, like the neighbouring states, paid their respects to him by their ambassadors. They endeavoured to excuse themselves; alleging the dread of their enemies; but the apology was borne by agents of so degraded a character, that, it appeared a manifest demonstration of disrespect. Cortes, at the instance of the Tlascalans, refused to see them; but, sent other messengers to Cholula, reproofing this irreverence, and demanding the submission and fealty of the state to the King of Spain, its rightful lord. On the next day, the Cholulans in mockery of this arrogant pretension, or with the purpose of better concealing their designs, presented themselves with due formality at the Spanish quarters, and declared themselves not only friends of the Spaniards, but vassals of their king.*

XI. Before his departure from Tlascala, Cortes received a new embassy from Montezuma, with a present of gold valued at ten thousand crowns, and ten bales of feather mantles, many of which he distributed among his allies. The ambassadors expressed the surprise of the emperor at Cortes' stay with the Tlascalans, whom they denounced as robbers, too vile even for slaves, and earnestly entreated him to hasten with his followers to Mexico, by the way of Cholula.

XII. Cholula was at this time a populous city, eighteen miles south of Tlascala, and sixty east from Mexico, celebrated alike for its commerce and its sanctity. It contained, including the suburban villages, a population of more than 200,000 souls. Its chief products were cotton cloths, gems and manu-

* Clavigero. Bernal Diaz.

factures of clay. It had been the favorite city of Quetzalcoatl, and after his apotheosis was consecrated to his worship, and held in great veneration, by all the religious of Anahuac. The nations of this country made pilgrimages to it, as the catholics to Rome, or the Mahometans to Mecca; and its many temples, particularly the great one which we have already described, were constantly crowded with worshippers.

Cortes was accompanied from Tlascala by a large portion of the army of that Republic, but which he reduced to six thousand men.* A short distance from Cholula, he was met by the principal nobles and priests, bearing censors and musical instruments, who paid him the compliments usual on such occasions. They invited him and his followers, together with the Totonacas into the city; but refused admission to their enemies the Tlascalans, who encamped without the walls imitating in the disposition of their forces, in the order of the sentinels, and in other matters, the discipline of the Spaniards. The latter were lodged in some large buildings, where, during the two first days, they were abundantly supplied with provisions; but, after this period, their supplies decreased, until nothing was furnished by the city, but wood and water. In this unequivocal mark of disrespect, the vigilance of Cortes might have discovered treachery; but other proofs of evil intentions soon accumulated. The citizens about the Spaniards turned from them with a mysterious sneer.—The Chempallese discovered pits which had been dug in the streets of the city; and which having been filled, with sharpened stakes, were covered over with earth, that the horses might fall therein.—Some Tlascalans, who gained entrance into the city in disguise,

* B. Diaz, says two thousand.

assured the General, that the women and children of the town were departing, a certain sign of impending commotion—and that on the preceding night, seven victims, five of whom were children, had been sacrificed to the god of war.—And lastly a Cholulan woman of rank, who had become attached to Marina, entreated her to seek an asylum in her house against the dangers which threatened the Spaniards. The sagacious interpreter alarmed at this request, drew from her friend all the knowledge she possessed of the plot. She learned, that Montezuma had placed in ambush, at a short distance from the city, twenty thousand men; that seven thousand lay hid within the walls; that arms had been distributed among the peasants, and large quantities of stones were collected on the terraces of the houses; that Montezuma, counted upon destroying here the whole of the Spanish forces, some of whom he had directed to be sent to him alive, that he might at once satisfy his curiosity and sacrifice them to the gods; and that she knew, these commands had been issued by the emperor, who had sent the customary symbol of war, a golden drum, to her husband, who was commander of the city forces. This woman having been brought before Cortes, confirmed all she had related to Marina. But, unwilling to act precipitately, or upon any other than the most satisfactory evidence, he charged Marina to use her art to bring to him, two of the principal priests, from whom he extracted such information, that he could no longer doubt the evil designs of Montezuma and the fanatic Cholulans. He prepared at once, not only for defence, but, to inflict a punishment upon the latter, that might render his name terrible throughout the land, and deter its inhabitants from further treachery.

Having summoned the chief persons of the city to his quarters, he enquired whether they had any

cause of complaint against the Spaniards; proffering in such case instant satisfaction. They replied, that they were entirely content with his conduct; were happy to render him any service, so long as it suited him to remain in their city; and that when it pleased him to depart, they would supply him with every thing necessary for his journey and with troops to protect his march. Cortes accepted this offer and fixed the day for his departure. The chieftains returned to their homes, congratulating each other on the favorable opportunity which this arrangement afforded, for the completion of their designs; while Cortes submitted to a council of his officers, an account of the impending danger. Some recommended a retreat to the city of Huexotzinco, scarce nine miles distant, but the majority referred themselves to the determination of the General.

On the morning of the appointed day, he gave orders to the eager and delighted Tlascalans to prepare for storming the city, and ranged his own troops in battle array, in one of the courts of the building he inhabited, himself appearing at their head on horseback. The troops tendered by the Cholulans, with about forty nobles, were now admitted into the court, and Cortes sternly reproached them for their treachery. The nobles charged the Mexican ambassadors who remained near the army, with having excited them to the attempt; but the General who found it convenient to dissemble, chided them in the presence of the ambassadors for the falsehood of their declarations, and assured the latter of his protection in the dreadful hour that was approaching. The signal being given by the firing of a musket, the Spaniards fell upon the astonished and dismayed crowd, who destitute of leaders and disarmed by surprise, fell almost unresisting victims to the crimes of their chiefs. When this slaughter was completed, the Spaniards rushed

into the streets, and put to death indiscriminately all they met, whilst the ferocious Tlascalans who had entered the city, sated their thirst for vengeance. The unhappy Cholulans resisted with desperation. Some converted their temples into places of defence, others broke up the wall surrounding the sacred shrine of Quetzacoatl, vainly hoping for the avenging floods. Wherever resistance was made, the assailants applied the destructive fire, and the temples and the chief dwellings of this distinguished city were wrapt in conflagration. The principal streets ran blood, and were choked by mangled and half burned and blackened carcases. The sack continued two days, on the last of which an additional Tlascalan force of twenty thousand men arrived, under the younger Xicotencatl. The slaughtered citizens exceeded in number six thousand, but not a single Spaniard perished. The survivors were despoiled of their most precious effects; the Spaniards seizing the gems, gold and silver, and the Tlascalans the apparel, feathers and salt. The auxiliary Tlascalan army was dismissed, charged with a full proportion of the spoil, but the original six thousand were retained to accompany the Spaniards to Mexico.

At length the stern and unrelenting justice of the General was appeased, and he condescended to stay the sword. The captive nobles were liberated and, having been bitterly reproached for their treachery, were required to recal the fugitive citizens and re-establish order in the town. In a few days the city was again filled with inhabitants, and the traces of desolation in some measure removed. Cortes received the congratulations of the Huexotzincas, and Tlascalans, and the oath of allegiance to the crown of Spain from the Tepejachese, and even from the Cholulans, themselves, who amid the ruins of their smoking temples yielded respectful

service to the slayer of their relatives and countrymen. With strange inconsistency, the men, who could themselves riot for two days in merciless homicide, and offer to their own baleful passions hecatombs of victims, shuddered at the sacrifices of the heathen altars, and in horror broke the cages which confined the prisoners, and gave liberty to the doomed slaves. The great temple was cleaned and the cross erected by blood stained hands, and lips which had scarce ceased to cry the onslaught, were employed in teaching a faith of mercy and peace. The body of Indians, who were posted without the city to intercept the Spaniards, fled in dismay when apprised of the discovery of the plot.*

This deed of Cholula has stained the reputation of Cortes, whose conduct in Mexico hitherto, save when prompted by intemperate religious zeal, was that of a brave, prudent and able leader. Of the guilt of the chiefs it is not permitted us to doubt, else the Spanish General was a monster of cruelty, and injustice. But we may well question, whether the punishment was not greatly disproportionate to the offence; and whether it was not unjustly applied to the mass of the people, whilst their more guilty chieftains, felt only its reflective force. The visitation of the sins of the rulers upon the subjects is almost unavoidable, in international polity; but it can be strictly just, only, when the people have power to control their rulers, and refrain to use it; in all other cases, all violence beyond what is necessary to prevent injury, and consequently all vindictive punishment, is atrocious, and such is unquestionably the character of this fatal deed. The virtues and vices of Cortes were alike vehement, and in the inhuman slaughter of Cholula we behold, a constitu-

* B. Diaz. Cortes' Lett. Solis. Clavigero. Robertson.

tional excess which has but too commonly impaired the fame of most heroes.

XIII. Whilst the success of his meditated vengeance was doubtful, Cortes dissembled his indignation, against Montezuma, but now, elated by success he ventured to give full scope to his feelings; and he charged the Mexican ambassadors to inform their master, that though he had hitherto intended to enter Mexico, peaceably, as a guest, late events had disposed him to assume the character of an enemy. The ambassadors replied, that before he adopted such a resolution, he should make a more strict inquiry into the intentions of their king; and proposed that one of them should bear his complaints to the foot of the throne. To this he consented; and the messenger after six days returned, bringing a present in gold, worth five thousand sequins* fifteen hundred habits and a large quantity of provisions, with thanks, too, of the king to Cortes, for the punishment he had inflicted on the faithless Cholulans; protesting that, the army which lay in ambush, was composed of the *Achatzinches* and *Itzocanese*, the allies of Cholula, who, though subjects of Mexico, had assumed arms without the orders of their sovereign. To such degradation had the unmanly fears of Montezuma reduced him! Cortes appeased by the present, appeared to give full credit to this apology.†

XIV. Yet the hypocrisy of the emperor was rendered more apparent, by the proceedings of his officers on the coast. *Quauhpopoca*, the Governor of *Nauhtlan*, a small city on the Mexican gulph, thirty-six miles north from Vera Cruz, and near the confines of the Mexican empire in that quarter, had orders from Montezuma to reduce the Totonacas to their wonted obedience, as soon as Cortes

* More than \$ 10,000.

† Clavigero, book 8.

had retired from the coast. They, confident in the protection of their new sovereign, scoffed at the Governor's demand of tribute, and when payment was attempted to be enforced by the sword, invoked the aid of Juan Escalante and the garrison of Vera Cruz. This officer remonstrated in vain with the Mexican Governor; who, asserting the mandate of his sovereign, informed the Spaniard that if he proposed to support the rebels, he would meet him upon the plains of Nauhtlan, where arms might decide the contest. Escalante readily accepted this defiance, and marched to the appointed field, with two horses, two small pieces of artillery, fifty Spanish infantry and ten thousand Totonacas. Upon the first fierce onset of the Mexicans, the dastardly auxiliaries were thrown into confusion and took to flight; but the Spaniards courageously continued the battle, and by the force of their cannon and the superiority of their tactics compelled the Mexicans to retire to Nauhtlan, whither they pursued them and set fire to some houses. But the victory cost them the life of Escalante, who died of his wounds three days afterwards, and seven soldiers who fell in combat. The head of one of the latter, remarkable for its size and the fierceness of its aspect, was carried to Montezuma, who, shocked by its appearance, refused to suffer it to be offered to the gods in any temple of the city. Cortes received intelligence of these circumstances whilst at Cholula, but he suppressed it, lest he should discourage his army.

XV. Cortes now resumed his march for Mexico, escorted by the Tlascalan and some Huexotzinca and Cholulan troops. At Izzalpan, a village of Huexotzinco, fifteen miles from Cholula, the chiefs of that country renewed their protestations of fealty; and informed him that two roads led to Mexico; one, broad and well made, which skirted some

precipices, where there was much reason to apprehend an ambuscade; the other shorter and more direct was newly obstructed by trees cut down for that purpose. The General chose the latter route, and to the remonstrances of the Mexicans upon its impediments, replied, that difficulties, only excited the enterprise of his people. In crossing the mountain Ithualco, between the volcanoes Popocatepec and Iztaccihuatl, by this road, the army suffered considerably by a fall of snow, which whitened the surrounding country.

XVI. From the summit of Ithualco, the Spaniards first obtained a view of the Vale of Mexico, then, the most striking and beautiful prospect on the face of the earth. When they observed fertile and cultivated fields stretching apparently in endless extent, the lake like a sea, encompassed by large towns, and the splendid city of Mexico, with its lofty temples and turrets rising from its bosom, the scene appeared like the creation of magic, surpassing all that their imaginations had been able to conceive. Its effect upon the wondering spectators was very various. The sanguine and confident already rioted in the wealth they beheld, not doubting to become its immediate possessors: But the more timid or more prudent revolved in their minds the temerity of their attempt to subjugate a people so numerous and so well instructed in the arts.

XVII. In the mean time Montezuma, in consternation at the event of Cholula, had retired to the Palace of Mourning, where for eight days, he subjected himself to the usual austerities, to avert the anger of his gods. From this place, he despatched four persons of the highest order of nobility to Cortes, to express his grief that he should have incurred so much trouble in coming from a far country to visit him, and his earnest desire, that he

would return without entering the city of Mexico; promising to pay an annual tribute to the Spanish king, and to send after the army, four loads of gold for the General, and one to each of his captains and soldiers; assuring him at the same time, that his further advance was impracticable, the roads being impassable and the whole force of the empire interposed for its defence.* The present brought by the ambassadors on this occasion, consisted of wrought gold, valued at three thousand pesos. Cortes received the messengers with every demonstration of respect, rendered his thanks to the king, for his present donation and his magnificent promises; declaring, however, that he could not recede, without disobedience to his sovereign; and protesting, that he neither designed, nor would permit the smallest injury to the Mexican State; and that should the emperor, after hearing the message which he bore, and which he could not communicate to any other, disapprove of the longer stay of the Spaniards in his dominions, they would without delay return to their native country.

The panic terror of Montezuma grew so strong under his ascetic devotion and the false oracles and new visions of his priests, that without waiting the issue of his last embassy, he convoked a council consisting of the king of Tezcoco, his brother Cuitlahuatzin, and other chief persons of his court. Cuitlahuatzin maintained the advice he had formerly given, that the strangers should be turned from their purpose, at all hazards, by persuasion, or by force; whilst Cacamatzin contended for the propriety of receiving them, as ambassadors, alleging that

* The ordinary load of a Mexican porter was fifty Spanish pounds or eight hundred ounces; from this data, Clavigero estimates, that the value of the gold offered by Montezuma on this occasion, exceeded three millions of sequins,—more than six millions of dollars—a sum which he surely could not have paid.

the king had power to crush them, at his pleasure, should they become dangerous to the state. The irresolute and mutable monarch again changed his purpose; and adopting the advice of his nephew, sent him with a new invitation to Cortes to advance.

XVIII. Having dismissed the ambassadors, the Spanish General moved with his troops from Ithualco to Amaquemecan and Tlalmanalco, two cities about nine miles distant from each other, situated near the base of the mountain.* The first, then contained with the adjacent hamlet, above two thousand inhabitants. The chiefs of these places waited on Cortes, with a small present of gold and some slaves, giving utterance to bitter complaints against the oppression of Montezuma, and finally acceded to the confederacy which had been formed, by the other nations against his power. Thus, Cortes discovered, that the discontent which had destroyed the strength of the empire at the extremities was also corrupting its very heart; and the nearer he approached the capital, his own force increased, like the current of a river, by auxiliary streams, as it flows on to its estuary.

XIX. From Tlalmanalco, the army marched to Ajotzinco, a village on the southern shore of the lake of Chalco, where it remained during the night. On the following morning, when about to depart, the General was informed that the king of Tezcuco, was approaching his quarters and requested that he would await his visit. The barbaric splendour of this dependent monarch amazed the Spaniards. He was borne on the shoulders of eight

* * Amaquemecan, called by the Spaniards Meeameca, is confounded by Solis with Ajotzinco. It was never situated, as he says, on the border of the lake, but at twelve miles distance from it, on the side of the mountain. It is at present an inconsiderable village. Clavigero.

nobles, in a magnificent litter adorned with green plumes, and enriched with jewels set in branched columns of solid gold; a splendid retinue of Mexican and Tezcucan nobility surrounded him; and when he alighted from his palanquin, his servants preceded him, industriously removing whatever might offend his feet or his sight. He entered the hall where Cortes awaited him with an air of majesty, seated himself deliberately, and then politely congratulated the General and his officers on their happy arrival, and expressed the pleasure which his uncle enjoyed in forming an amicable connection with the mightiest monarch of the East: but he exaggerated the difficulties of reaching the court, and earnestly sought to deter Cortes from proceeding thither. Perceiving his efforts to be fruitless, his auditor pleading the commands of his own sovereign, to the contrary; he remarked, that in that case, they should meet at Court; and graciously took his leave, but delegated some of the nobles who attended him, to escort Cortes on his journey.

XX. The city of Cuitlahuac, to which they next proceeded, though small, appeared the most beautiful which the Spaniards had yet seen. It was founded on a small island in the lake of Chalco, and communicated with the main land by two causeways, one from the south, of two miles in length, and the other from the north of somewhat greater longitude. The chief magistrate of this city, also, complained, in secret, to Cortes, of the tyranny of the king of Mexico, joined himself to the confederacy against him, and betrayed the consternation into which the oracles of the gods, the phenomena in the heavens and the success of the Spanish arms had thrown Montezuma.

XXI. On the road to Iztapalapan, Cortes was much gratified by the visit of Ixlilxochitl, the insurgent prince of Acolhuacan, who having been

reconciled to his brother Coanacotzin, appeared with him in the Spanish camp and invited the General to Tezcuco, whither, in order to improve the advantages which might probably result from the friendship of these princes he promptly repaired. Ixlilxochitl, here, explained to him more at length his pretensions to the throne, and his causes of complaint against his brother Cacamatzin and the king of Mexico. Cortes promised to put him in possession of the crown as soon as he had finished his negotiations at Mexico, and, without delaying at Tezcuco, marched onwards to Iztapalapan.

XXII. Iztapalapan was a large and beautiful city, near the point of the small peninsula, between the lakes of Chalco on the south, and Tezcuco on the north, from which a road of seven miles in length, over the lake, led to the island of Mexico. It contained at this period, more than twelve thousand houses, upon the peninsula and several contiguous islands. The city was governed by Cuitlahuatzin, brother of Montezuma and his immediate successor to the crown of Mexico, who with another brother, Matlatzincazin, Governor of the city of Cojohuacan, received Cortes, with great ceremony and magnificence. We give a further description of this pleasant city in the words of Bernal Diaz. "They, (the princes,) conducted us to our lodgings there, in palaces magnificently built of stone, and the timber of which was cedar, with spacious courts and apartments furnished with canopies of finest cotton. After having contemplated these noble edifices we walked through the gardens which were admirable to behold, from the variety of beautiful and aromatic plants, and the numerous alleys filled with fruit trees, roses, and various flowers. There was also a lake of the clearest water which communicated with the grand lake of Mexico by a channel cut for the purpose.

capable of admitting the largest canoes. The whole was ornamented with works of art, painted and admirably plastered and whitened, and it was rendered more delightful by numbers of beautiful birds. When I beheld the scenes that were around me, I thought within myself, that this was the garden of the world! This place, was at the time of which I am speaking, with one half the houses in the water and the other half on dry land; but all is destroyed; and that which was a lake, is now a tract of fields of Indian corn, and so entirely altered that the natives themselves could hardly know it.”*

XXIII. On the next day the Spaniards marched by the road of Iztapalapan, which was intersected by small canals over which they passed by convenient drawbridges.† After having passed in view of Mexicaltzinco, Colhuacan, Huitzilopocho, Cojohuacan and Mixcoac, cities, all situated on the shores of the lake, they arrived at a place called Xoloc, where the causeway of Iztapalapan united with that of Cojohuacan. In the angle, which is not more than half a league distant from the capital, stood a bastion with two small towers, surrounded by a wall more than ten feet high, with battlements, two entrances, and a drawbridge.—A place most memorable in the history of Mexico, from having been the camp of the Spanish General, during the siege of the city. Here, the army halted to receive the compliments of more than a thousand Mexican nobles, uniformly dressed, who in passing the Spanish General saluted him in the usual mode, by touching the earth and kissing the hand. The march of the Spaniards was beset by an immense concourse of people. The dyke, the shore, the

* Bernal Diaz, cap. 7.

† This causeway was eight yards wide.

lake itself, was covered with people, all anxious to catch a glimpse of the *Teules*, or divinities, who had so strangely descended upon them. But the reflections of the Spaniards upon this occasion were not of the most pleasing character. They called to mind the attempts already made, and which were ascribed to Montezuma, for their destruction, and the predictions of their allies, that they were marching to Mexico as victims for sacrifice; and they could not but perceive, that the destruction of the bridges behind them would effectually cut off their retreat and leave them isolated on a narrow dyke, exposed to all the machinations of their enemies. In this situation we can readily pardon the vanity of Diaz when he exclaims, “And now, let who can, tell me, where are men in this world to be found, except ourselves, who would have hazarded such an attempt?”

XXIV. From the point of Xoloc, the army resumed its march after the delay of an hour, preserving the strictest order of battle. A short distance from the city Cortes was informed of the approach of Montezuma himself, and soon after his harbingers came in sight. There appeared first two hundred persons in a uniform dress, with large plumes of feathers, alike in fashion, marching two and two, in deep silence, barefooted, with their eyes fixed on the ground. These were followed by a company of higher rank, in their most showy apparel, in the midst of whom was Montezuma, on a chair or litter, covered with plates of gold, and borne on the shoulders of his principal nobles, whilst others carried a canopy of curious workmanship, which defended him from the sun. The monarch wore, suspended from his shoulders, a mantle adorned with jewels of gold and precious stones; on his head a light crown of the same materials, and on his feet shoes of gold, tied with strings of leather,

studded with gold and gems. Immediately preceding him, marched three officers with rods of gold in their hands, which they raised on high, at intervals, and at that signal all the people bowed their heads and hid their faces as unworthy to look on so great a prince. When he drew near, Cortes dismounted, advancing towards him with officious haste, and in a respectful posture. At the same time Montezuma alighted from his palanquin, and supported by the king of Tezcuco, and the Governor of Iztapalapan, approached with a slow and stately pace, his attendants covering the way with cotton carpets, that he might not touch the ground. The principal parties saluted each other with profound reverence, each after the fashion of his country. This expression of veneration from inferiors towards those who were above them in rank, appeared such amazing condescension in a proud monarch, who scarcely deigned to consider the rest of mankind of the same species as himself, that his subjects were more firmly convinced that the persons before whom he thus humbled himself were, indeed *Teules*, or beings of a superior nature. At this interview, little else passed than the compliments of salutation and the interchange of presents, in which Cortes received for strings of coloured glass, some necklaces of mother of pearl, from which hung many craw fish, very artfully wrought in gold. Montezuma charged prince Cuitlahuatzin to conduct Cortes to his dwelling, and retired himself with the king of Tezcuco to his palace.

XXV. After the emperor had retired, the army pursued the road of Iztapalapan, to the southern gate of the great temple, and thence through the city, the distance of a mile and a half, to the palace destined for its reception. Here Montezuma awaited the arrival of Cortes; and taking him by the hand, seated him on a sofa, similar in form to

a modern altar, covered with embroidery, and placed in a hall hung with cotton hangings embroidered with gold and gems; and having in all respects provided for the accommodation of his guest, he took leave of him with the most courteous politeness. "You are now," said he, "Malintzin,* with your brothers in your own house; refresh yourself after your fatigue, and be happy until my return."† The quarters allotted to the Spaniards had been the palace of Axajacatl, the father of Montezuma. It was surrounded by a stone wall with towers, at proper distances, serving for defence as well as ornament, and the apartments and courts were sufficiently large to accommodate the Spaniards and their Indian allies, amounting, servants and women inclusive, to several thousands in number. The greatest neatness and propriety reigned throughout; the chambers were provided with couches and pillows of rushes, and coverlets of fine cotton, the walls were tapestried with the same material of various colours, and the floors carpetted with mats. The first care of the General was to take precautions for his security; planting his artillery so as to command the avenues which led to the palace; and appointing a numerous guard with instructions to observe the like vigilant discipline as if in sight of an enemies camp.‡

* By this name Cortes was known to the Mexicans. It was a corruption of the word Marina, and may be rendered Marina's man.

† November 8th, 1519.

‡ Solis. Diaz. Herrera. Clavigero. Cortes. Robertson.

CHAPTER IV.

I. Description of the city of Mexico....II. Montezuma's second visit to Cortes—His munificence—His speech....III. Reply of Cortes....IV. Cortes visits the King—Attempts to convert him to the christian faith....V. Visits the city and its fortifications....VI. Apprehensions of Cortes—He resolves to seize the King....VII. Trial and execution of Quauhpopoco and his officers for resisting Escalante....VIII. Motives of Cortes' severity....IX. Insurrection planned by Cacamatzin—His arrest—Cortes builds vessels on the lake....X. He requires formal submission of the Mexican monarch and nobles to the Spanish crown....XI. Demands tribute—Division of the treasure acquired....XII. New attempt of the Spaniards to introduce the christian faith....XIII. The Mexicans combine to expel the Spaniards—The King requires their departure....XIV. Cortes is informed of the arrival of a fleet on the coast—And that it was sent by Velasques....XV. Arrival of the expedition under Narvaez—His agents are made prisoners and sent to Cortes....XVI. Extraordinary difficulties and resources of Cortes....XVII. Narvaez marches to Chempoalla....XVIII. Cortes resolves to attack him—Leaves Alvarado in command at Mexico....XIX. Battle of Chempoalla and victory over Narvaez.

I. The course of our labours has already given us occasion to describe most of the remarkable objects in the city of Mexico. We shall, consequently, notice here, only, such matters of general interest, as have not before required our particular

attention; a knowledge of which will better enable the reader to understand the events of the memorable siege of the ill fated capital.

The city of Mexico was, then, situated, on a small island, in the lake of Tezcoco, fifteen miles west from the city of Tezcoco, and four east from Tlacopan. It was united to the main land by three great causeways of stone and earth, raised in the lake; that of Iztapalapan, on the south, seven miles, that of Tlacopan on the west, two miles, and that of Tepejacac on the north, three miles in length.* Beside these, another dyke sustained the aqueduct of Chalpotepec. The circumference of the city, exclusive of the suburbs, measured ten miles, and the number of dwellings has been variously estimated, from sixty to one hundred and twenty thousand.† It was divided into four quarters; and each quarter into several districts; the Mexican names of which, are preserved among the descendants of the Indians. The dividing lines of the quarters were the four roads leading from the gates of the greater temple. After its union with the city, Tlatelolco made a fifth grand division, lying on the north-west. Around the city were many dykes and reservoirs, for collecting water when necessary; and within it, so many canals, that scarce any part was unapproachable by water. The principal streets were broad and straight, paved and free from water; whilst others were mere canals, passable by boats only, and bordered by terraces; sometimes serving as quays, at others, for small gardens, filled with fruit trees, or gay and fragrant flowers. The houses, except those of the poor, had generally balconies with parapets, and

* This account of the causeways is from Clavigero, from which Dr. Robertson has corrected the erroneous description given in the first editions of his work.

† See Vol. III. page 81.

some, battlements and towers which gave to them a defensive character, similar to that of the temples. Besides the market of Tlatelolco, already described,* there were smaller ones distributed throughout the city; and public gardens ornamented with lakes and fountains added much to its health and beauty. The many and great buildings neatly whitened and polished, the lofty towers of the temples rising in various quarters, the silver lake and canals, the verdant groves and gardens, when seen from the upper area of the greater temple, formed a scene so lovely, that the Spaniards were never weary of gazing upon it.

II. Montezuma, whose hospitality and curiosity alike led him to observe his guests, paid them, on the evening of their arrival, another visit, with less state than in the morning, yet, accompanied by many of his nobles. His munificence, which appears to have been truly royal, was conspicuous on this occasion. Upon his entrance he presented the Spanish General, with many curious pieces of wrought gold, silver and feathers, and more than five thousand very fine dresses of fine cotton; and after his departure, having informed himself of the rank and condition of his companions, he sent to each officer, some wrought gold, and three bales of fine feather dresses, and to each private soldier, two bales of cotton garments. Having seated himself and placed Cortes by his side, the monarch interrupted the grateful acknowledgments of the latter, by a speech, which if authentically reported, bears evidence at once, of the intellectual cultivation, policy and courtesy his nation had attained.

“ Before you deliver to me, illustrious captain, and valiant strangers, the embassy with which you

* Vol. III. page 330.

are charged, it is proper that we should remove from our minds the false impressions which vagrant rumour commonly preceding truth, and always obscuring her, may have made. I have been represented to you as one of the immortal gods, whose nature and whose power extended to the heavens. My wealth has been grossly exaggerated, until the walls and roofs of my palaces have been converted into gold. I have been denounced to you as a haughty and cruel tyrant, unjust, and impious. But neither of these representations are true. This frail flesh, (raising the skin of his arm,) betrays my mortality notwithstanding the nobleness of my birth and the elevation of my rank. My riches are great, but as you perceive my palaces are not of gold. The complaints you have heard of my injustice are the false accusations of my enemies or rebellious subjects, who term the lawful exercise of the supreme authority, tyranny; and call that cruel, which is but the wholesome rigour of justice."

"The reports, respecting yourselves, have not been less wild and delusive. You have been depicted to us, as terrible divinities, mounted on beasts of tremendous size and fierceness, who wielded the lightning, and ruled the elements—as monsters, cast up by the sea,—as men, tormented by an insatiable thirst of gold, for the gratification of which you have deserted your own country; addicted to sensuality, and so gluttonous, that each consumed more than ten of our people. But we are now disabused of these errors. We perceive, that though differing from us in complexion and beard, you are like us mortal,—that the beasts which obey you are only stags larger than, and somewhat different in shape from, ours—that, the pretended thunder and lightning, is nothing more than the discharge from shooting tubes,* which though more

* Cerbottane, see vol. iii. page 327.

ingenious and powerful than those we employ, are like them, artificial. We have also learned, that you are kind and generous; these qualities are incompatible with covetousness; that you are patient under misfortune, and indisposed to severity, unless your anger be justly provoked; and that you use your dreadful arms only in personal defence."

"Dismissing from my mind, therefore, all false conceptions in your regard, I accept with pleasure the embassy from your great monarch; I rejoice in his friendship and voluntarily submit my kingdom to his obedience; since, the period seems to have arrived, foretold by our ancestors, when certain men from the east, differing from us in habits and customs, should arrive, to claim possession of this country. We are not the original people of this land. Nor is it many years since our ancestors came hither from the regions of the north; and we have ruled our subjects, but as the viceroys of Quetzalcoatl, our god and king."

III. The reply of Cortes, to this extraordinary speech, was in all respects judicious; and had his subsequent conduct been equally wise and moderate, according to some historians, he might, have reduced this wide empire to the dominion of his master and established the religion of the cross, without the crimes and desolation, which are now justly ascribable to him.* But, he had already no doubtful testimony of the hypocrisy and vacillation of the king, and of his resolution to get rid of the troublesome invaders, by any means; and we may therefore, safely infer, that, the sincerity, was equal on either part. The General thanked the monarch, for the singular kindness he had hitherto displayed, and for the favorable opinion he now expressed towards the Spaniards. He had been

* See Acosta, book vii. chap. 25. Clavigero, book ix.

sent, he said, by the greatest monarch of the East, who, although, he might, as the descendant of Quetzalcoatl, aspire to higher authority, was content to form an alliance of perpetual amity with his majesty and his successors; that the object of his embassy was not to take from any one, that which he possessed, but, to announce the true religion, and certain improvements in the art of government which would render his subjects happy, for which purpose, he would avail himself of some future, and more convenient opportunity.

IV. On the succeeding day Cortes visited the king accompanied by the Captains Alvarado, Sandoval, Velasques and Ordaz, and several soldiers. They were attended to the regal palace by the officers of ceremonies and an immense concourse of people, who when they reached the outer gate of the palace, ranged themselves in files, on either side of the guests; observing that it was unseemly to enter in a crowded and irregular manner. Having passed through three courts, and some halls, they were received in an anti-chamber by several lords in waiting, who required of them to put off their shoes, and to cover their splendid uniforms with coarser garments. When they entered the hall of audience, the king advanced a few steps towards Cortes, took him by the hand, and bestowing a look of kindness upon his companions, caused them all to be seated. A long and interesting conference ensued, Montezuma asking many and pertinent questions relative to the government and natural productions of Spain; from which Cortes artfully led the discourse to his religion. He endeavoured to explain to the monarch, the unity of God, the creation of the world, the severity of the judgments of the deity, the glory with which he rewards the just, and the eternal punishment to which he dooms the wicked. He then discanted

on the rites of christianity, and particularly, on the pure and unbloody sacrifice of the mass, which he contrasted with the cruel offerings of the Mexicans; declaiming against the barbarity of the oblation of human victims and making food of their flesh. Montezuma replied, that he had received from his ancestors an account of the creation of the world, similar to that now communicated to him; that, his ambassadors had already explained to him the great principles of the Spanish faith; "I," he added, "do not doubt of the power and goodness of the God whom you adore; but if he be propitious to Spain, so are our gods to Mexico. Spare yourselves therefore the trouble of endeavouring to induce me to abandon their worship. With regard to our sacrifices, I am yet to learn, that we merit condemnation for offering to the gods, the lives of men which have been forfeited by their own crimes or the fate of war." In complaisance to the Spaniards, seeing their great repugnance to the use of human flesh as food, some historians assure us, that the king forbade it to be brought again to his table. Upon the departure of his visitants, he made them new presents; to Cortes and the officers several pieces of wrought gold, and to each soldier a necklace of the same metal.*

V. From motives of prudence as well as of curiosity, the Spanish General was desirous to explore the city, and particularly to examine its fortifications. He demanded permission of the king to see the royal palaces, the principal temples, and public squares; which was instantly granted. When Cortes and his attendants mounted the greater temple, the king was there awaiting his arrival, that by his presence he might preserve his gods from violence. The request of Cortes for admission

* Bernal Diaz. Solis. Clavigero.

into the sanctuaries was granted, after a consultation of the priests. Having beheld the horrors which surrounded the terrible Huitzilopochtli and the subordinate deities, and revolted from the stench of human gore, with which the walls were every where stained, he, could not refrain from again remonstrating in energetic terms against the abominations of such a worship. The king received his remarks, with evident displeasure and declared, had he supposed the General would have spoken disrespectfully of his gods; he would not have suffered him to behold them. Cortes apologized, and respectfully took his leave. "Go in peace," said Montezuma, "but I must remain to appease the anger of our divinities whom you have provoked by your blasphemies." Though grossly superstitious, this prince was not intolerant. He cheerfully gave permission to the Spaniards to build within their quarters, a chapel, for their worship, and to raise in the principal court a gigantic cross; whence, Cortes ardently looked forward to the moment, when he should convert the very sanctuary of Huitzilopochtli into a christian temple.

VI. In his survey of the city, Cortes saw much reason to regret the rash confidence with which he had entered it. He perceived, that in this singularly situated town, the destruction of the bridges over the causeway would leave him exposed to a myriad of enemies, against whom, even at this moment his best defence consisted in the favor of the prince and the superstition of the people. The former was proverbially precarious, and the latter might be as effectually used against him as it now operated for him. Already had the result of the battle with Escalante, impaired the influence of the Spaniards with the Indians around Villa Rica; and should the vulgar cease to believe them immortal and invincible, their fate might be at once sealed.

by one overwhelming attack. These reflections induced Cortes to seek some means of immediate safety, and his audacious spirit guided by a sound and sure judgment settled upon a plan, which to any other mind would have seemed desperate. He resolved to make himself master of the person of Montezuma, and to confine him in the Spanish quarters. The probabilities of this bold plan had been well weighed. Montezuma, it was obvious, had a greater love of life than of empire; and he, who had power to deprive him of the one, might confidently direct his disposition of the other. No danger was to be apprehended from a sudden indignation of the people, since their habitual and superstitious reverence for the monarch rendered them altogether submissive to his commands.

Having firmly resolved upon the measure, he submitted it to a council of his captains, and a few of his most approved soldiers; communicating at the same time, the death of Escalante and his conviction that this event already known to the Indians, had diminished their respect; which was obvious from the decreased quantity of food supplied, and the reluctance of their service. The timid were startled by the proposition; but, the intelligent and resolute, saw at once, that it presented the only prospect of safety, and they cordially united in the determination, instantly, to make the attempt. At his usual hour of visiting Montezuma, Cortes went to the palace accompanied by Alvarado, Sandoval, Lugo, Velasques de Leon and Davila, five of his principal officers, and as many trusty soldiers. Thirty chosen men followed, not in regular order, but sauntering at some distance, as if actuated by no other motive than curiosity; small parties were posted at proper intervals, in all the streets leading from the Spanish

quarters to the Court; and the remainder of his troops, with the Tlascalan allies, were under arms ready to sally forth at the first alarm.* Cortes and his companions were admitted without suspicion; the Mexicans retiring as usual out of respect. The king received them, with more than his wonted kindness; presented one of his daughters to the General, and distinguished females of his court to his attendants. The former, however, addressed the monarch in a tone very different from that he had hitherto used; reproaching him as the cause of the assault made upon the Spaniards by one of his officers and demanding public reparation for the death of *one* of his companions, suppressing from policy, the knowledge he possessed of the fate of Escalante and others. Montezuma was confounded at this unexpected accusation; but earnestly protested his own innocence and proffered to surrender Quauhpopoca and his accomplices to the justice of the Spaniards; delivering to two of his courtiers a jewel from his arm, which was the substitute for a seal, and evidence of his peremptory command for their arrest.* Cortes replied, with seeming complaisance, that the protestation left no doubt on his own mind; but that something more was necessary to satisfy his followers, who would never be convinced, that Montezuma did not harbour hostile intentions against them, unless he consented to take up his residence in the Spanish quarters, where he should be served and honoured, as in his present palace. At this extraordinary proposal, the astonished monarch, beheld all the evils he had dreaded, about to fall upon him. Terror and indignation, for a time, rendered him mute; but at length the latter prevailing, he exclaimed, “That persons of his rank were not ac-

* Robertson. Solis. Clavigero.

customed, voluntarily to surrender themselves prisoners; and were he degraded enough to submit, his subjects would not suffer such an affront, to be offered to their sovereign.” Cortes unwilling to resort to force, endeavoured alternately to sooth and intimidate him. The altercation became warm; and having continued for a long time, Velasques de Leon, equally bold and impetuous, cried out with impatience, “we waste time in vain! seize him instantly, and if he resist stab him to the heart.” The threatening voice and fierce gesture of the truculent soldier, scared the timid king, and he eagerly demanded of Marina what the furious stranger said. “I Prince,” she replied, “as your subject desire your happiness, but as the confident of these men, know their secrets and their character. If you condescend to do what they require, you will be treated with all the honour due to your royal person; but, if you persist in your refusal, your life will be in danger.” The unhappy prince saw that this was indeed true; and, should he call for his guards, that, he would inevitably be slain before they could reach him. He, therefore, in great trepidation and agony of spirit exclaimed, “I confide myself to you; let us depart, let us depart, since it is the will of the gods.”*

His equipage being prepared, he declared to his attendants, that reasons of state required he should spend some days with the strangers, and commanded them to proclaim his resolution throughout the city. Astonished and afflicted, his officers did not presume to question the will of their master; but bathed in tears, they bore him in silent pomp to his prison. When the people beheld their emperor, thus, in the power of the Spaniards, who under

* B. Diaz says, that he offered to Cortes, his legitimate son and two daughters, as hostages of his faith, but that they were rejected by Cortes.

pretence of respect, marched close around his litter, they broke forth into transports of grief and rage, threatening his captors with immediate destruction. But, when Montezuma, with a cheerful countenance waved his hand, the tumult was hushed, and upon his declaration, that, he went voluntarily to reside a short space of time with his new friends, the multitude accustomed to revere the slightest intimation of their sovereign's pleasure, quietly retired.

Thus, was a powerful prince seized by a few strangers, in the midst of his capital, at noon-day, and carried off as a prisoner, without opposition or bloodshed.* History contains no parallel to this event, either with respect to the temerity of the attempt, or the success of its execution. And were not all its circumstances authenticated, by unquestionable evidence, they would appear so wild and extravagant, as to surpass the probability which should be preserved even in fictitious narration.†

Montezuma was received in the Spanish quarters with all the respect due to his rank. He was attended by his own domestics, and served with his usual state. His principal officers had free access to him, and he carried on his government as if at perfect liberty. And whilst the Spanish soldiers were commanded to guard him with diligence, every instance of disrespect was punished with great severity. In his confinement, the king sometimes amused himself by games of address with Cortes and Alvarado, in which he was frequently a voluntary loser, that he might have an opportunity of exercising his liberality. On one occasion he thus gave away unwrought gold weighing one hundred and sixty ounces. This prodigality seemed bound-

* Eight days after the entry of the Spaniards into Mexico.

† B. Diaz. Solis. Clavigero. Robertson.

less. The Spaniards had observed in their quarters, a suite of chambers, the entrance of which, had recently been walled up. Upon opening it they discovered it to be the depository of the treasures of the father of Montezuma, consisting of religious images, and many works of gold, gems, cotton and feathers. Cortes, on one occasion of the king's generosity, informed him, that some knavish soldiers had stolen from these chambers, several pieces of gold, which he would immediately cause them to restore. "Provided," said the king, "they do not touch the images of the gods, nor the utensils destined to their worship, they may take what else they please." The artful and avaricious Spaniard thus gained possession of this considerable treasure.*

VII. But, to be plundered by his host, was the least of the captive's humiliation. Quauhpopoca, his son, and fifteen other nobles,† who served under him, were brought prisoners to the capital, and delivered to Cortes, that he might inquire into the nature of their crime and determine their punishment. They were formally tried by a Spanish court martial; and though they pleaded the commands of their lawful sovereign in opposing the invaders of their country, they were condemned to be burned alive. This atrocious sentence was immediately executed, in front of the principal palace of the king; and the fuel of the pile was composed of the weapons collected in the royal magazines for the public defence. A vast multitude, beheld in silent astonishment, this sacrifice of a distinguished and patriotic warrior, for a noble act of duty, and the destruction of the arms, which, the nation had provided for avenging public wrongs.

* Clavigero.

† Robertson, says five, Diaz and Clavigero fifteen.

The Spaniards, however, were not satisfied with taking vengeance on the instrument of the alleged crime, but resolved, that, its author should also participate in its punishment. Before Quauhpopoca was led forth, Cortes repaired to the apartment of Montezuma, with some of his officers and a soldier carrying fetters. Approaching the monarch, with a stern countenance, he informed him of the fate to which his agents had been condemned; and that as they had charged him with being the cause, it was necessary that he, also, should atone for his guilt. Then turning away abruptly without waiting reply, he commanded the soldiers to put the chains upon his legs. The orders were instantly executed. The disconsolate king, trained up in the belief that his person was sacred and inviolable, and considering this profanation of it as the prelude of immeditate death, broke out into loud lamentations and complaints. His attendants speechless with horror, fell at his feet, bathing them with their tears; and bearing up his fetters in their hands endeavoured with officious tenderness to lighten their pressure. Nor did their grief and despondency abate, until Cortes returned from the execution, and with a cheerful countenance, ordered the shackles to be removed. As Montezuma's spirits had sunk with unmanly dejection, so they now, rose into indecent joy; and with an unbecoming transition, he passed, at once, from the anguish of despair to transports of gratitude, and expressions of fondness towards his deliverer.*

Historians have found some difficulty in reconciling these presumptuous, cruel and apparently wanton acts, with other parts of Cortes' conduct, and have supposed that they proceeded from the intoxication of success. But we think we behold in

* Solis. Bernal Diaz. Clavigero. Robertson.

these, as in his other daring acts the same motive principle. He had disclaimed, though feebly, the divinity, whilst he asserted the superiority of his nature; and he demanded obedience from the nations, as a right not less due to that superiority, than to his character of representative of the descendant of Quetzalcoatl. He saw Montezuma and his people, oppressed with gloomy superstition and dread, recognise this right, and he believed, that a magnanimous disregard of consequences, and a stern resolution to punish with the utmost severity, all injuries done to himself and his followers were indispensable to maintain the opinions which had so essentially served him. Hence the horrible slaughter at Cholula, and the temerarious seizure of the person of Montezuma; in which, as well as in the late acts, Cortes acted upon calculation,—the usual calculation of a hero; calmly measuring the quantity of crime necessary to produce a given effect. The soundness of his judgment was obvious in the results. For, although he, immediately after this outrage to the monarch, gave him permission to go abroad, he made no effort to free himself from Spanish thraldom. During the ensuing six months that Cortes remained in Mexico, he continued in the Spanish quarters apparently as tranquil as if his residence there had been of choice; and when on a visit to the temple, or on hunting excursions beyond the lake, a guard of a few Spaniards were sufficient to assure his return. Thus Cortes had attained more extensive authority in the Mexican empire, than he would have acquired in a long course of time by open force. Adopting the policy, so much boasted in modern times, of ruling a state through the magistrates and forms of government already established, he exercised more absolute sway in the name of another than he could have done in his own.

IX. The people subjugated by the same superstition, and over-awed by the commands of their emperor, made no attempt to deliver him from confinement. But, all were not thus servile. Cacamatzin, in the vigour of his age, entertained sentiments more becoming his birth and his station. He reproached his uncle with his submission to the arrogant strangers, and endeavoured to arouse him to a due consideration of what he owed to the empire and to himself, and to make an effort to shake off the disgraceful yoke. Failing to excite him to honorable action, he resolved himself to take up arms in defence of his country, his religion and his throne. Unfortunately for his success, he was unpopular in his own kingdom of Acolhuacan, and his patriotism was viewed with distrust by the Mexicans. Hence, Cortes, when apprised of the designs of the prince, found means through the agency of Montezuma, to arrest him in his palace of Tezcuco, and transport him a prisoner to Mexico. His crown was given to his brother Cuicuitscatzin to the exclusion of Coanacotzin and Ixtlixochitl, the next in order of descent. Soon after, the Spanish General also got into his power the king of Tlacopan and the Governor of Iztapalapan and Cojohuacan, brothers of Montezuma, two sons of the same monarch, the high priest of Mexico and other persons of the first distinction. But these were not his only precautions for security. It was necessary to have such command of the lake as to insure retreat, if expelled from the city, and the bridges or causeways should be broken up. This too, he was enabled to accomplish; having awakened the curiosity of Montezuma to see the floating palaces, which flew over the waters without the use of oars. Whilst timber was being cut down and prepared near the lake, part of the naval stores was brought from Vera Cruz. With the assistance of the In-

dians, the Spanish carpenters soon completed two brigantines, which afforded a frivolous amusement to the monarch and a valuable resource to the Spanish commander.

X. Montezuma had already made informal and vague acknowledgments of submission to the catholic king: But Cortes was now encouraged to demand an open and ceremonious expression of vas-salage by which Montezuma should declare his crown to be holden of him as his superior, and his dominions to be subject to annual tribute. With this requisition, the most humiliating that could be made to a lofty spirit, the obsequious Montezuma complied. He convened the chief men of his empire, and in a solemn harangue reminding them of the traditions and prophecies relative to the arrival of a people, sprung from the same stock as themselves, in order to take possession of the supreme power, he declared his belief that the Spaniards, were this promised race; that, therefore, he recognised the right of their monarch to govern the Mexican empire; that he would lay his crown at his feet and obey him as a tributary. The bitterness of this avowal was apparent in the tears and sobs which accompanied it. It was received by the assembly, with mute astonishment, followed by a sullen murmur of sorrow and indignation, the usual precursor of violence. Cortes foresaw the coming storm and seasonably averted it, by declaring, that his master designed not, to deprive Montezuma of his throne, nor to make any innovation upon the laws and constitution of the empire. The act of submission and homage was executed with all the formalities the Spaniards chose to prescribe.

XI. The immediate consequence of this act, was a demand on the part of Cortes, for a magnificent present from Montezuma to his sovereign; and after

his example, his subjects brought in very liberal contributions. The Spaniards now collected all the treasure which had been either voluntarily bestowed upon them by Montezuma, or had been extorted from his subjects; and having melted the gold and silver, the value of these, exclusive of jewels and ornaments preserved for their workmanship,* amounted to six hundred thousand pesos. The soldiers were impatient to have it divided. One fifth was set apart as the customary due of the King; another fifth to Cortes as commander-in-chief; and from the balance the sums supplied by Velasques, Cortes, and his officers for fitting out the expedition were then deducted. The remainder was divided among the army, including the garrison of Vera Cruz, in proportion to the rank of its members. After so many defalcations, the share of a private soldier did not exceed an hundred pesos. This sum was so far below their expectations, that some soldiers rejected it with scorn, and others murmured so loudly, that it required all the address and no small portion of the liberality of Cortes to appease them. The complaints of the army were not wholly destitute of foundation. The *quint* or fifth of the crown, which had made no advances, was a grievous tax, and the share of the General was enormously disproportionate to that of the soldier;—and some of Cortes' favorites had secretly appropriated to their own use several ornaments of gold of great value.†

The total sum amassed by the Spaniards, bears little proportion to the ideas that might be formed, from the descriptions given by historians, of the ancient splendour of Mexico, or the production of

* The wrought gold thus preserved was valued at \$100,000

† Many of the soldiers also appropriated jewels to their own use. Their glittering array excited the envy, and overcame the faith of the army of Narvaez.

its mines in modern times. But it must be remembered that the precious metals were not standards of value and were in request only for the fabrication of ornaments and trinkets, consecrated to the gods, or worn as marks of distinction by princes or eminent chiefs. The art of working the mines, with which the country abounded, was unknown; and the gold the natives possessed had been collected, as in Hayti, by searching the sands of the rivers; and even this simple operation according to the report of those whom Cortes had commissioned to survey the richest provinces, was very unskillfully performed. Silver being rarely found pure, and the art of refining it being little understood, the quantity of this metal was still less considerable. Thus, though the Spaniards had exerted all their power, and often with indecent rapacity, to gratify their predominant passion; and though Montezuma had exhausted his treasures, in hopes of satiating their thirst for gold, the product of both, which probably included a great part of the bullion in the empire, did not exceed the value above mentioned.*

XII. Hitherto Cortes had owed his great success to his judicious use of the Mexican superstitions. Even the priests who could not but tremble at the introduction of new gods, though anxious and watchful, were quiescent, whilst his most arrogant pretensions did not run counter to the traditions they had taught the people, nor openly oppose the practices of their religion. But, Cortes and his companions were scarce less bigotted than the Mexicans; and the honours of martyrdom were in their estimation, only second to those of conquest.

* B. Diaz. Solis. Clavigero. Robertson.

Diaz relates that the captains had chains of gold made for them by the king's workmen, and that Cortes had a service of plate from the same artizans.

With the zeal of a missionary, Cortes had frequently importuned Montezuma to renounce his false gods and embrace the christian faith. But the monarch had been distinguished for his piety from youth, and his regard for his religion as his faith in its truth, was ardent and sincere, and he rejected with unfeigned horror every proposition to change the worship of the nation. Yet, as we have already observed, he was not intolerant; but had cheerfully acquiesced in the erection of a christian chapel, and in the baptism and conversion of the women he gave to the Spaniards, including even his own daughter. Cortes finding his efforts ineffectual to shake the constancy of Montezuma, became so much enraged at his obstinacy, that in a transport of zeal, he led out his troops to throw down the idols in the great temple by force. But the priests taking arms in defence of their altars, and the people crowding with great ardour to support them, his prudence induced him to desist from the attempt, after dislodging the idols from one of the shrines and placing in their stead an image of the Virgin Mary.*

XIII. From that moment, the Mexicans, who had permitted the imprisonment of their sovereign, and suffered the exactions of the strangers without a struggle, began to meditate means to expel or destroy them. The priests and nobles held frequent consultations with their monarch for this purpose. But as he justly dreaded the consequences of violence both to himself and his people, he resolved to essay gentle means to effect their departure. Summoning Cortes to his presence, he observed, that, now, the purposes of his embassy were accomplished, the gods had declared their will and his subjects their desire, that he and his followers

* Cortes' Lett. B. Diaz. Herrera. Gomarca. Robertson.

should immediately depart from the empire; declaring in case of their refusal to comply, that unavoidable destruction would fall upon their heads. The tenor of this unexpected requisition, and the determined tone in which it was uttered, left Cortes no room to doubt, that it was the result of a concert between the king and his subjects; and that seeming compliance might be indispensable to his safety. He replied with great composure, that he had already begun to prepare for returning to his own country; but having destroyed the vessels which brought him, some time was requisite for building other ships. Workmen were immediately proffered to him for this purpose, and some Spanish carpenters were appointed to superintend the work. Cortes flattered himself, however, that during the interval he should either find means to avert the threatened danger or receive such reinforcements as would enable him to disregard it.

XIV. Almost nine months had elapsed since Portecarrero and Montejo, had sailed with his despatches for Spain, and he awaited their return with anxious impatience, expecting that they would bring him troops, or at least a confirmation of his authority and proceedings, which would enable him to recruit them in the islands. Without this, the daring adventurer who had attained the command of an empire, was in danger of the doom of a traitor. His agents had disobeyed his instructions; Montejo, taking advantage of the illness of his companion, had compelled Alaminos, the pilot, to put into a port in Cuba, under pretence of getting provisions from his estate at El Marien, whence he sent advices to Velasques.* Had this circumstance been known to Cortes, his anxiety in relation to the future would have been still more intense.

* Bernal Diaz. Robertson.

Whilst brooding over the uncertainty of his condition, he was again summoned to the presence of the emperor; who gladly informed him, that it was no longer necessary to build vessels, for that eighteen, similar to those he had destroyed, had arrived at the port of Chalchiuhcuecan, in which he might embark with all his troops; and requested that he would hasten his departure, as that had become essentially important to the welfare of his kingdom. It is difficult to reconcile the opinion which the monarch seemed sincerely to entertain of the intention of Cortes to withdraw, from Mexico, with the demands of that commander and the compliances of the feeble king. Did the latter suppose that his promises of fealty and tribute, were void of meaning? Or were the relations now subsisting between himself and the Spaniards misunderstood, by reason of their imperfect mode of communication? The latter, we incline to think was the truth. Cortes exulted in these tidings, fondly believing that his messengers were returned from Spain; but whilst he communicated the glad news to his companions, he dissembled his joy before the king; observing that if this fleet was voyaging towards Cuba, he should depart, but otherwise it was requisite that the building of the ships should proceed. The pleasing delusion was soon dissipated. A courier from Sandoval, whom Cortes had appointed to succeed Escalante in command at Vera Cruz, informed him, that the armament was fitted out by Velasques, and instead of bringing the aid which they expected, threatened them with immediate destruction. Cortes received this unexpected blow in the presence of Montezuma, without change of countenance, nor did he undeceive his companions, until he had prepared them for the truth.

To the course which Velasques had now pursued, he was excited by every passion which can agitate

an ambitious mind;—shame, at having been so grossly overreached; indignation, at being betrayed by the man in whom he most confided; grief, for having wasted his fortune to aggrandize an enemy; and despair of recovering so fair an opportunity of establishing his fame and extending his power. Nor did he want authority for his attempt. His report of Grijalva's voyage had been so favorably received by the Spanish Court, that he was empowered to prosecute the discovery, and appointed Governor of the country during life, with more extensive privileges than had been granted to any adventurer, since the time of Columbus. His ardour in carrying on his preparations, was in proportion to his excitement; and in a short time an armament was completed, consisting of eighteen ships, having on board fourscore horsemen, eight hundred foot soldiers, of whom eighty were musqueteers and a hundred and twenty cross-bowmen, together with a train of twelve pieces of cannon. Not even the unfortunate result of his former attempt to procure fame by deputy could overcome the sloth of Velasques; he vested the command of this formidable body in Pamphilo de Narvaez, with instructions to seize Cortes and his principal officers and send them prisoners to Cuba, and then to complete the discovery and conquest of the country in his name.*

XV. After a prosperous voyage Narvaez landed his army near St. Juan de Ulua.* Three soldiers whom Cortes had sent to search for mines in that district, immediately joined him. From them, he received information concerning the progress and situation of their leader, but as they were more regardful of recommending themselves, than of adhering to the truth, they represented the state of

* Solis. Herrera. Diaz. Robertson. April, 1520.

their late General to be so desperate, and the disaffection of his followers to be so great, that the inflated confidence and presumption of Narvaez led him into fatal security, from which the ill success of his first measure did not arouse him. He commissioned Guevara, a priest, to demand the surrender of Vera Cruz, who made the requisition with such insolence, that Sandoval seized him and his attendants and sent them to Mexico.*

Cortes received them as friends, and condemning the severity of Sandoval, set them immediately at liberty. By this clemency seconded by caresses and presents, he drew from them all the information he required, relative to the force and intentions of Narvaez. He learned that this commander regardless of the interest of his sovereign, had commenced his intercourse with the natives, by representing Cortes and his followers, as fugitives and outlaws, guilty of rebellion against their own king, and of injustice by invading the Mexican empire; and had declared that his chief object in visiting the country, was to punish the Spaniards who had committed these crimes, and to rescue the Mexi-

* B. Diaz gives an amusing account of this transaction. "Guevara insisting on executing his mission, called to the notary Vergara, to take out his authority, which he was preparing to do, but Sandoval stopped him saying, 'Look you, Vergara, your papers are nothing to me. I know not, whether they be true or false, originals or copies; but I forbid you to read them here. And by heaven if you attempt it, I will this instant give you a hundred lashes.' At this Guevara cried out, 'Why do you mind these traitors, read the commission.' Sandoval then calling him a lying knave, ordered them all to be seized; whereon a number of Indians who were employed about the fortress having been prepared for the purpose, threw nets over them, like so many damned souls, and making them fast, instantly set off with them, on their backs, for Mexico; they hardly knowing, if they were dead or alive; or if it was not all enchantment, when they travelled in such a manner post haste, by fresh relays of Indians, which were in waiting, and saw the large and populous towns which they passed through, with a rapidity which stupefied them."

cans from oppression. He perceived, also, that these unfavorable misrepresentations had reached Montezuma, and with them, assurances from Narvaez that he would soon free the monarch from the subjection under which he laboured. That prince readily entered into a secret intercourse with the newly arrived General, and courted him as one superior in dignity and power to those whom he had hitherto so highly revered; and the inhabitants of several districts adopting the same views, openly revolted from Cortes.*

XVI. The difficulties of Cortes were of a most extraordinary character, which served only to display his still more extraordinary ability. To await the approach of Narvaez in Mexico, seemed inevitable perdition, for while the Spaniards pressed him from without, the inhabitants would eagerly seize the favorable opportunity to avenge their manifold injuries: If he should abandon the capital, set the captive monarch at liberty, and march upon the enemy he must relinquish the fruits of his previous toils and victories, which could not be recovered without extraordinary efforts and infinite danger. Negotiation with Narvaez was hopeless, as well on account of the haughtiness of his temper as the nature of his instructions. This however, for the justification and success of his ulterior measures, he resolved to attempt.

In this work of pacification, he employed father Olmedo; sending before him Guevera and his companions, with instructions to attempt the fidelity of the officers. Narvaez scornfully rejected every offer of accommodation, and was with difficulty restrained from laying violent hands upon the mediator. But with the officers his emissaries had grea-

* The deserters whom Narvaez had received, had acquired sufficient knowledge of the Mexican language to serve as interpreters.

ter success. The letters from Cortes and his principal companions, addressed to their late associates of Cuba, united with the presents of the former and the wishes honestly entertained for the prevention of civil war, which threatened utterly to destroy the Spanish power in Mexico, induced them, generally, to declare for an immediate accommodation. Narvaez not only disregarded their advice, but treated some of the officers with great severity, and publicly proclaimed in the most contemptuous terms, Cortes and his adherents, rebels and enemies to their country. Further communion between the officers of the two armies propagated widely the disaffection which had sprung up in that of Narvaez, and which did not advance the more slowly, that the same Andres de Duerro who had originally recommended Cortes to the favor of Velasques, was now in authority with Narvaez, and received the strongest assurances of obtaining wealth and consideration from Cortes pursuant to a contract made between them at Cuba.* In a word, so effectually were Cortes' means of corruption employed, that the principal officers of the new army became thoroughly devoted to his interests, some inferior ones joined his standard and he was promptly apprized of every resolution and movement in the enemy's camp. Narvaez upon discovering the state of his army, was irritated almost to madness; he set a price upon the head of Cortes and his principal adherents;† and arrested and shipped to Cuba, the magistrate Vasques de Aillon, who had been sent by the Jeronimite Friars, representing the king in America, to Cuba, to interpose

* Diaz says, that by this agreement Cortes was to divide equally with Duerro and De Lares, the gold he should acquire. That the latter was dead, but that Cortes sent to Duerro, at this time, two Indians laden with gold, and made to him the most magnificent promises.

† B. Diaz. Solis. Clavigero. Robertson.

between Velasques and Cortes, and had now accompanied the expedition for the like purpose.

XVII. Narvaez marched from the place of his landing to Chempoalla, where he was favorably received by the Cacique as the friend of Cortes. But the Indian was much surprised and disconcerted when he beheld the supposed ally seize all the gold, the robes and the women, which Cortes had obtained here and which had been confided to his care.

XVIII. Having failed, as he expected, to conciliate Narvaez, Cortes determined immediately to advance upon him, and try the fate of arms. He left Alvarado in command of an hundred and fifty men in Mexico; and to this slender garrison he committed a great city, with the wealth he had amassed, and what he esteemed of still greater consequence, the custody of the imprisoned monarch. He endeavoured to conceal from Montezuma the real cause of his march, labouring to persuade him that the newly arrived strangers were his friends and fellow subjects, and that after an interview with them, they would together return to their own country. The captive prince, unable to comprehend the designs of the Spaniards, or to reconcile what he now heard with the declaration of Narvaez, and fearful of betraying any distrust of Cortes, promised to remain quietly in the Spanish quarters and to cultivate the friendship with Alvarado that he had uniformly maintained with him.*

* Herrera. Robertson. But Bernal Diaz gives a different account of this interview with Montezuma. He says, "that Cortes having waited on Montezuma previous to our march, the king offered him assistance against his more numerous foes; but asked an explanation of the charges which Narvaez had made against Cortes and his party. The General replied, that he had refrained to speak to his majesty on this subject, lest he should grieve him; that it was true, that he and Narvaez were subjects of the same monarch, but utterly false, that we were traitors; the king of Spain he said ruled many countries, the inhabitants

He left with Alvarado eighty-three men, and seven horses, taking with him one hundred and eighty soldiers, which were increased by the addition of seventy men under Sandoval. Allowing, therefore, for a small garrison at Villa Rica, it would seem that the force brought by Cortes had been reduced one half. He dreaded most the superiority of his enemy in cavalry, and against this, he made able provision. Having observed that the Indians in the province of Chinantla used spears of extraordinary length and force, he armed his soldiers with this weapon, and accustomed them by frequent exercises to its use. During his march to Chempoalla, he made repeated efforts toward accommodation. But Narvaez requiring that Cortes and his followers should recognise him as Governor of New Spain, by virtue of the powers derived from Velasques, and Cortes refusing to submit to any authority, not founded on a commission from the emperor himself, under whose immediate protection he and his adherents had placed their

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of some of which, were braver than others; that we were all natives of Old Castile, and called true Castillians, and that our opponents were commanded by a Biscayan: that his threats to destroy us were little to be regarded, since we were upheld by our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Blessed Mother; that his majesty would soon see the difference between them and us, as he hoped soon to bring back these boasters with him as prisoners. He also expressed his hope that Montezuma would to his utmost, endeavour to prevent any insurrection in the city, as he certainly would, on his return, make those who behaved ill dearly answer for it." Solis, says, "that, in reply to questions relative to the disunion between subjects of the same prince, Cortes informed Montezuma that this captain, so intemperate in his language, should rather be considered as inconsiderate and mistaken in zeal than disobedient to his master. That he visited the coast under the authority of a lieutenant of the king, who residing in a distant island knew not the recent wishes of the Court; and that whatever misunderstanding might exist, would be speedily removed by an interview, for which purpose he was about to hasten to Chempoalla."—Solis. vol. ii. chap. 7.

infant colony, these attempts proved fruitless. Narvaez having learned that Cortes had advanced within a league of Chempoalla with his small force, considered this an insult which merited chastisement, and marched out with all his troops to offer him battle.

XIX. Cortes, too prudent to fight such an enemy, greatly superior in numbers and equipment, upon equal ground, preserved his position upon the opposite bank of the river Canoas, where he was well secured against attack. Towards the close of the day a heavy tropical rain came on, and the followers of Narvaez unaccustomed to military hardships, murmured so loudly at being thus fruitlessly exposed, that he, moved by their unsoldierly impatience, and his own contempt for his adversary, permitted them to retire to Chempoalla. From this circumstance Cortes conceived the hope of a sudden victory. His hardy veterans, though exposed without any shelter to the peltings of the storm, he observed were still fresh for service; and foreseeing that the enemy would give himself up to repose, in the belief that the season was wholly unfit for action, he resolved, to fall upon them in the dead of night, when surprise and terror would more than compensate for the inferiority of his numbers. His troops unanimously applauded this determination, and he had more difficulty to temper, than to inflame their ardour. He divided them into three parties. At the head of the first, Sandoval was charged to seize the enemy's artillery, which was planted before the principal tower of the temple, where Narvaez had fixed his head quarters; Christoval de Olid commanded the second; and the third a body of reserve, the smallest in number, was conducted by Cortes himself, to support the others as there should be occasion. Having passed the river, which was so much swollen that the wa-

ter almost reached their chins, his troops advanced in silence, each man armed with his sword, his dagger and Chinantlan spear. Narvaez, however confident, was not wholly regardless of a General's duty; he had placed two sentinels to watch the motions of the enemy. One of these was seized by the advance guard, the other made his escape, and running to the town, gave timely notice of the approach of the foe. But the infatuated and arrogant commander imputed this alarm to the cowardice of the sentinel, and derided the idea of an attack, which the shout of Cortes' soldiers soon taught him was real. The rapidity of the assault was such, that only one cannon was fired, before Sandoval's party closed with the cannoneers, and drove them from their guns, which they turned upon the tower. In vain did Narvaez strive by his courage to redeem the consequences of his imprudence. His shouts of encouragement to his friends were answered by the redoubled efforts of his foes; whose compact order and long spears bore down all opposition. They had already reached the entrance of the tower when a soldier having set fire to the reeds with which it was covered, compelled Narvaez to sally forth. He was immediately wounded in the eye with a spear, dragged down the steps and secured in chains. The cry of victory was raised among the soldiers of Cortes, and a panic terror seized their foes. The troops from the first tower began to surrender, and those stationed in the two smaller ones were thrown into confusion. In the darkness, they could not distinguish friends from foes—their own artillery was pointed against them, and they mistook even the fire flies to which they were accustomed, for the matches of musqueteers, advancing to the attack.—After a short resistance the soldiers compelled their officers to capitulate, and before morning all laid down their

arms and submitted to the conqueror. The loss was inconsiderable on either part; that of Cortes being only two soldiers killed, and that of the adverse faction two officers and fifteen privates.* The successful and politic General treated the vanquished as countrymen and friends, and proposed either to send them back to Cuba or to admit them into his army, as partners in his fortune, on equal terms with his own soldiers. The latter was eagerly accepted by adventurers who sought nothing better than to overrun a rich and populous country under a skilful leader, and who saw in Cortes, and the advantageous position he held in Mexico, all that they could hope, even by a long period of contest, to obtain.

Thus by a series of events in which good fortune seconded ability, Cortes not only escaped perdition which seemed inevitable, but, when he had the least reason to expect it, obtained a thousand Spaniards ready to follow wherever he should lead. It cannot be doubted that these advantages were as much the result of his intrigues before, as his courage and skill in the battle; and that the ruin of Narvaez was occasioned not less by the treachery of his own troops than the valour of the enemy.

* The fleet of Narvaez followed the fate of his army, the ships were dismantled and the command given to Cavallero, one of the captains, who was appointed admiral.

CHAPTER V.

- I. Cortes proposes a further exploration of the country—Is recalled to Mexico, by the imprudence of Alvarado....II. Return of Cortes to Mexico—Change in the deportment of the Mexicans—His haughty conduct to Montezuma....III. The Spaniards suffer from the privation of food....IV. Hostile attacks of the Mexicans....V. Death of Montezuma—His qualities....VI. Further combats....VII. The Noche Triste, or night retreat of Cortes from Mexico....VIII. Battle of Otompan....IX. Friendly reception of the Spaniards in Tlascala....X. Other Spanish losses—Policy of Cortes....XI. Discontent of the soldiers of Narvaez....XII. Excursion against the Tepejacans....XIII. Excursion against Quauhquechollan, Iztoccan and Tochtepec....XIV. Cortes receives supplies from Cuba and Jamaica—His strength....XV. Cuitlahuatzin raised to the throne of Mexico—His measures for defence....XVI. Death of the new Emperor and election of Quauhtimotzin....XVII. Cortes advances to Texcoco—Seats Ix-lilcochitl on the throne of that kingdom....XVIII. Cortes subdues the cities and states around the lakes....XIX. Transportation of the brigantines. XX. Cortes makes further progress around the lake....XXI. He receives reinforcements from Hispaniola—Launch of the brigantines upon the lake....XXII. Conspiracy against Cortes....XXIII. Cortes surveys his forces—March for Mexico—Execution of Xicotencatl....XXIV. Destruction of the aqueducts of Chalpotepec—Trial of the brigantines....XXV. Commencement of the siege of Mexico....XXVI. Cortes

changes his mode of attack....XXVII. The Spaniards make a permanent lodgement within the city—Quauhtimotzin taken prisoner.... XXVIII. Surrender of the city.

I. At the head of a force so respectable, comprising nearly one hundred horsemen with abundant supply of the munitions of war, the enterprising and comprehensive mind of Cortes prepared to make a further exploration of the country. He had already detailed parties for this purpose, and instructed his officers to survey the coasts of the Mexican gulph, when he was compelled to concentrate his troops, by unhappy tidings from the city of Mexico.

On the approach of the great festival of Huitzilopochtli, which was holden in the month *Toxcatl*, commencing this year on the 13th of May, Montezuma requested permission from Alvarado to visit the temple, that he might unite with the priests, the nobles, and the people, according to custom, in its celebration. The prudence or timidity of that officer, rejected the application; and the king, that he might participate in the sacred rite, directed the festival to be holden in the court of the palace occupied by the Spaniards. None were admitted save those of the higher order of priests and the principal nobles, who were adorned with their richest jewels. During the long dance which formed part of this stated religious ceremony, Alvarado, closed the gates and stationed guards at every avenue. At a given signal the remainder of the Spanish troops rushed with irresistible fury upon the unarmed, the astonished and wearied multitude. The slaughter was terrible, from which a few only escaped, who succeeded in leaping the walls. When the horrible tragedy was completed, the executioners stripped the bodies of the glitter-

ing jewels, which probably formed the chief inducement to the act.* To justify this inhuman deed, to his General, Alvarado alleged that he had received intelligence from two of the nobles and a priest, of a design on the part of the Mexicans to attack him. This may possibly have been true; and the dull intellect of the fierce soldier may have been incapable of discovering any other mode of averting the danger. But, if the defence be admitted, we must also admit that the Mexicans had, very extraordinary ideas of making war, when they enclosed themselves unarmed, in the very den of the lion. Bernal Diaz, exonerates Montezuma from all hostile designs, and expressly declares, had he willed it, he might readily have destroyed at this period the whole Spanish force.†

The people, driven beyond their patience, fiercely assaulted the Spanish quarters, broke down part of the outer wall, and undermined the palace in several places; and though repelled by the fire of the artillery, they returned to the attack on the succeeding day, and having slain seven of the Spaniards, would have destroyed the whole, had not Montezuma, compelled by his gaolers, restrained their fury. But though respect for their monarch

* Robertson, upon the authority of several historians, has laid the scene of this infamous deed within the great temple; Acosta and Clavigero, in the court of the residence of Cortes. The latter, from all circumstances, seems most probable. Gomara estimates the number of nobles present at six hundred, others, at more than a thousand. Las Casas, whose testimony on such occasions must be received with much allowance, at more than two thousand.

† The testimony of honest Diaz is the more entitled to credit, that he relates, without strong marks of credulity, a circumstance narrated by Alvarado in his exculpation. A number of Indians, says the latter, enraged at the detention of Montezuma, and the erection of a crucifix in the temple, had by the order of their gods attempted to pull down the cross, but to their infinite astonishment found, that all their strength was unable to remove it.

and fears for his safety, diverted the assault from the Spanish quarters, the people did not desist from hostilities. They burned the brigantines on the lake, and blockaded their foes in the palace, drawing a ditch around it, with the resolution to destroy them by famine.

II. The garrison of Mexico was in this critical situation when Cortes received two messages, by the faithful Tlascalans, urging earnestly his immediate return to Mexico. To him the danger seemed so imminent as to admit neither deliberation nor delay. He hastened, therefore, with all his forces from Chempoalla, with no less rapidity than he had advanced thither. At Tlascala his army was augmented by two thousand selected warriors. But on entering the Mexican territories, he discovered that disaffection to his interests was every where prevalent. The principal inhabitants had deserted the towns through which he passed, and no provision was made for the subsistence of his troops. The roads, which on his former march were crowded by anxious and curious multitudes, were now silent and solitary; the people avoiding with horror all intercourse with him. Had the Mexicans possessed a very small portion of the martial science of their enemies, they might easily have accomplished their destruction. Had they suffered the advancing army to enter on the causeway of Iztapalapan, and broken up the road and removed the bridges in their front and rear, the whole must have fallen a prey to famine. But they, ignorantly, again suffered Cortes to march into the city without molestation and quietly to take possession of his former quarters.*

Pursuing the principles which had hitherto governed his conduct, his demeanour towards Monte-

* Bernal Diaz. Solis. Robertson. Clavigero.

zuma, was marked with haughtiness and disrespect. He not only neglected to visit the monarch, but, barbed the insult with expressions of contempt for him and his people.* Some Mexicans, who had acquired sufficient knowledge of the Spanish language to comprehend the contemptuous words, reported them to their countrymen, who, now satisfied that the intentions of the General were alike cruel with those of his lieutenant, resolved to renew the war with the utmost fury. Cortes, however, who was justly irritated at the wanton and unseasonable cruelty of Alvarado, severely censured that officer, and was restrained, only by the consideration that he should need the services of a brave leader, from inflicting upon him condign punishment.

III. The force of Cortes within the walls of the city, amounted, auxiliaries included, to nine thousand men; a part of whom were quartered in the enclosure of the great temple. For this multitude he found great difficulty to obtain provisions; the Mexican husbandmen, from hatred to the Spaniards, refusing to attend the markets. Cortes commanded Montezuma with stern threats to cause his subjects to bring to the city the customary supplies; and when the king urged the impossibility of executing this order whilst not only he, but the chief officers of the crown were helpless prisoners, he liberated Cuitlahuatzin, the king's brother, to that end; who instead of tamely feeding, sought effectively to destroy, the oppressors of his country.

IV. On the day succeeding that, on which Cortes re-entered Mexico,† one of his soldiers, whilst

* Observing, on the remonstrance of his officers who had kindly feelings towards the king, "Out on the dog! why does he neglect to supply us with provisions?" "What owe I to the dog who treated secretly with Narvaez, and suffers us now to perish of want?"

† June 25, 1520.

executing a commission for the General, was assailed by the people, and driven back wounded to the Spanish quarters: A party under the command of Ordaz, sent out to inspect, and report on, the state of the city, was also driven in, with the loss of twenty-three slain, and many wounded; and a fierce attack was made and obstinately sustained upon the garrison, in which several Spaniards perished. A portion of the palace was set on fire, which was with great difficulty got under, by tearing down part of the buildings, and by covering the flames with earth. Nor did the assailants retire, until the departure of the sun, at which time, according to custom, they ceased to combat.

On the following day the assault was renewed with greater fury. In vain did the discharges from twelve pieces of artillery, sweep away the advancing columns, the desperate Mexicans instantly filled up the ranks, and pressed recklessly forward to the attack. Cortes beheld with astonishment, the men heretofore submissive to his slightest wish, now contend against his utmost power with the most exalted courage and fortitude. He attempted a sortie and though the mass gave way, momentarily, to the shock of the Spanish charge, and numbers perished by the keen and enduring sword, the warring multitude did not seem to diminish. And his greatest exertions during a whole day of conflict, enabled him only to make his way through one of the principal streets of the city, and consume a few dwellings. In obtaining these advantages he had more than fifty men wounded, and ten killed, and was himself much hurt in the hand. This severe loss admonished the General to take greater precautions for the security of the troops; and a day was devoted to the construction of four moving towers, called *mantas*, from each of which twenty-five soldiers might fight with the greatest

advantage, and drive the enemy from their most annoying position on the roofs of the houses.

V. In the mean time Cortes resolved to employ his prisoner Montezuma, to avert the fury of his subjects, and required that he should appear on the ramparts arrayed in royal robes, in order to attempt an accommodation, the basis of which should be, the departure of the Spaniards from the city. When the Mexicans on the following morning renewed the assault, the abject prince presented himself before them. At the sight of their sovereign, the combatants dropped their arms, the profound respect and religious awe his presence had always inspired came upon their spirits, and they listened in deep silence to his exhortations to lay down their arms, and to suffer their cruel enemies to depart. But, when he ceased, a sullen murmur spread through the multitude, expressive of strong indignation; and Quauhtimotzin his successor and the last king of Mexico, reproaching him for his superstition and cowardice, which had enslaved himself and entailed unheard of woes upon his country, seized a bow and aimed an arrow at his person. The veneration of the crowd was lost in the remembrance of their sufferings, and missiles of all kinds assailed the unhappy prince, who, insufficiently protected by the Spanish bucklers, received several slight wounds in the body, but far deeper ones in the spirit, fell to the ground and was borne to his apartments. Upon seeing him fall, his subjects, horror stricken, fled from the scene of their crime. Cortes hastened to condole with the unhappy monarch, who, now, conscious of the detestation of his people, and hopeless of regaining the affection and the state from which he had fallen, resumed the haughty tone of his character, and disdained to be longer the slave and tool of his country's enemies. Tearing the bandages from his

wounds, he refused all nourishment, and thus terminated his wretched life, rejecting with disdain every solicitation to embrace the christian faith.*

Some of the Mexican historians ascribe the death of Montezuma to the Spaniards. This is not probable, simply, because, it does not appear, that, his death would avail them in aught; and whatever may have been his deficiencies as a monarch, his private virtues had endeared him to the meanest soldier. In youth, and before he attained the throne, he was warlike and had conquered in many battles. He was magnificent, liberal, and luxurious: Proud in his deportment and severe in his judgments. In latter life, superstition and self indulgence had so enfeebled his mind that he seemed as his subjects reproached him, to have changed his sex. The body of the unhappy prince was delivered to his subjects and buried with the usual solemn rites. He left at his death several sons, three of whom perished in battle on the *Noche Triste*, or night of wo, as the Spaniards have named it, shortly after the decease of their father. Of those who survived, the most remarkable was *Iohualicahuatzin*, or Don Pedro Montezuma, from whom the Counts Montezuma and Tula were descended. He left also a daughter, from whom the noble houses of Cano Montezuma and Andreda Montezuma are derived. The Spanish monarch, in acknowledgment of the ready submission of Montezuma to their power, granted many special favors to his family.

VI. On the 28th Cortes made a sally with his towers, in hope that the troops in their march might be freed from the missiles thrown from the house tops. But the roofs of the engines were crushed by the massive stones torn from the walls and cast

* Herrera. Solis. Bernal Diaz. Clavigero. Robertson.

upon them; and unable to pass the first bridge which separated his quarters from the town, he returned, after, a struggle of several hours duration, leaving one man killed and carrying back many wounded.

The Mexicans were greatly encouraged by this successful resistance. Five hundred nobles fortified themselves in the upper area of the greater temple, which overlooked the Spanish posts and whence they could annoy the soldiers with the greatest advantage. Cortes dispatched Juan de Escobar with an hundred men to dislodge them. But he was thrice repulsed and the General resolved with an additional force to head the attack himself. Binding his shield to his wounded arm, he sallied forth with a large party of Spaniards and Tlascalans, who were bravely encountered and long resisted in the lower court. By degrees Cortes attained the upper area, where the combat was prolonged for several hours, and he was himself in great danger of perishing. Two young men, approached him as if craving quarter, and suddenly seizing him, attempted to throw themselves, with the General, into the lower area. But Cortes fortunately liberated himself from their grasp, and the devoted youths were precipitated together, over the precipice. The slaughter here was great, the sanctuaries were set on fire, and the troops retired without further molestation to their quarters. But forty-six Spaniards were slain outright and many others grievously wounded.

A speedy retreat was now indispensable, and Cortes endeavoured to obtain permission from the nobles to retire unmolested, urging his abhorrence to shed so much blood, and inflict so many evils as their obstinacy occasioned. They mocked his pretensions to humanity; but declared that they regarded not, what might befall themselves, provi-

ded they could destroy every one of their cruel enemies; and if they were unable to do this with the sword, it would assuredly be effected by famine.

The latter result seemed highly probable, as intimidated by the late fierce displays of Spanish courage, the Mexicans had changed their whole system of attack, and had applied themselves to barricade the streets and break down the causeways. To remove the former obstructions Cortes made a night sortie, and breaking into one of the principal streets, burned more than three hundred dwellings. On the next day he sallied by the dyke of Iztapalapan and obtained possession of several bridges, and filled portions of the canals, that he might render his retreat more easy and less liable to interruption. But this advantage cost him ten or twelve of his bravest soldiers. Again, on the succeeding day, he fought his way by the same road, and at last reached the main land. Whilst engaged in destroying the last bridge, and filling the last canal, he was informed that the Mexicans were disposed to capitulate, and for that purpose required the liberation of the chief priest, who had been made prisoner at the assault upon the temple. He hastened to his quarters and readily granted their request. This was a stratagem, however, by which they procured the indispensable presence of the priest, at the coronation of their new sovereign, and a cessation of arms, during which, they drove the Spaniards in charge of the road into the town, and rendered useless their two days labour.

VII. The dyke of Iztapalapan having been rendered impassable, it was resolved to attempt that of Tacuba, which leading in a direction opposed to Tlascala had been the least injured by the Mexicans. Unfortunately, the night was chosen for the retreat, from a knowledge of the general reluctance

of the Indians to fight in darkness, and not less from the advice of a soldier called Botello, whose claims to the vain science of astrology were even by Cortes confidently admitted. The army commenced its march towards midnight, on the first of July. Sandoval commanded the van, Alvarado and Leon the rear, and Cortes the centre, where were placed the prisoners, the artillery, the baggage, and a portable bridge for passing the breaches of the causeway. Here, also, was the king's fifth of the treasure; all the rest Cortes abandoned to his soldiers, advising them however to leave it, rather than incumber themselves with its weight upon the march. In profound silence the troops reached the first canal through the dyke, hoping, that their retreat was undiscovered. But the priests who watched in the temple now gave the signal, and their cry, "To arms! to arms! the Teules are flying," was answered by a tremendous burst of musical instruments and the shouts of an innumerable multitude, which lined the causeways, defended the breach and covered the lake with canoes. Flights of arrows and showers of stone poured from every quarter. And the Mexicans, in masses, impeding each other, rushed upon the Spaniards as on their devoted prey. The first ditch was passed in comparative safety; but the weight of the artillery sunk the bridge so deep in the mud, that it could not be removed. The rencontre at the second ditch was consequently terrible. The deep darkness of the night, was increased by heavy rain; and its silence was broken by the clamours of the combatants, the shrieks of the wounded, and the groans of the dying. The breach was too wide to be leaped and too deep to be waded. In the attempt to pass it by swimming, all order was broken, and the canal soon became so filled with dead bodies of men and horses, that the rear of the army was en-

abled to march over it. The third ditch presented like difficulties which were surmounted in like manner. Cortes with about one hundred foot soldiers and a few horse gained the main land. Having formed these as soon as he arrived, he returned with such as were capable of service, to assist the retreat of their friends and to encourage their exertions by his presence and example. Some he was enabled to save, but his heart was rent by the cries of those who sank beneath the enemy, or, taken prisoners, were borne off in the boats to be sacrificed to the gods.*

The loss of the Spaniards on this sad night consisted of more than four hundred and fifty Europeans, and four thousand auxiliaries; all the artillery; forty-six horses, the treasure which had been amassed, and the more valuable manuscripts of Cortes; a considerable part of the illustrious prisoners, among whom were, Cacamatzin, the deposed king of Acolhuacan; a brother, and son and two daughters of Montezuma and Maxicatzin. Of the Spanish officers, Cortes mourned with tears the loss of Velasques de Leon, who had, abandoned his own relative to cleave to him; Amador de Laviz, Francisco Morla, and Francisco de Saucedo.† He had the satisfaction, however, to learn that Aquilar and Marina, the useful instruments of his future fortune had been preserved.

The Mexicans might in this broken and dispirited condition of the Spanish army, by continuing the combat, have utterly destroyed their late haughty and cruel enemies. But, either a want of knowl-

* Alvarado crossed the third ditch by leaping it with his lance for a leaping pole. The leap was deemed so extraordinary that the pass still bears the name of *Salto d' Alvarado*. B. Diaz denies the possibility of the leap, and says that no spear could reach the bottom.

† Clavigero. Bernal Diaz.

edge in the art of war, the duty due to the dead, or some unknown cause, induced them to quit the pursuit; and they employed the following day in mourning, and paying funeral honours to their friends. In the performance of this melancholy office, they cleared the streets, dykes, and ditches, of dead bodies, burning them before they could infect the air by corruption.

At break of day, Cortes collected his wounded, wearied and afflicted soldiers at the village of Popotla; and thence marched through the city of Tlacopan, (Tacuba,) harrassed by some troops of that city and of Azcapozalco, to *Otoncalpolco*, a temple on the summit of a low mountain, nine miles west of the capital, where subsequently stood, and perhaps, still stands, the sanctuary of *The Virgin of Succour*. The army halted here to take some rest and nourishment; the latter being furnished by some Otomies who lived impatiently under the Mexican yoke, in adjacent hamlets. Tlascala was the only place in which Cortes could hope to receive effectual succour and the means of retrieving his fortunes. But he was now, on the west side of the lake, and Tlascala lay sixty-four miles distant from its eastern bank. It was necessary therefore to go round its northern end, to gain the road which led thither. Under the direction of a Tlascalan guide, he marched by almost impracticable ways, through ill cultivated and thinly peopled districts of Quauhtitlan, Citaltepec, Xoloc and Zacamolca, annoyed during their whole march by flying troops of the enemy, and so pressed by famine, that the Spaniards supped from the carcase of a horse, which had been killed that day; and the Tlascalans cast themselves upon the earth to graze like brutes.

VIII. During this painful march, the skirmishing parties of the enemy frequently exclaimed, "March on robbers, march on, you do but hasten

to the scene of punishment for your crimes." The meaning of this threat, not then understood, was appallingly explained, when on the next morning the Spaniards beheld from the mountains of Aztaquemecan, the plain of Tonan, between them and the city of Otompan, covered with a countless and brilliant multitude of their foes, who had selected this as a favourable spot, to complete the immolation they had successfully begun. The Castilians estimated this native army at two hundred thousand men, and the bravest soldiers quailed at the sight. But, Cortes, without waiting the growth of their fears, instantly formed his army, so that the flanks might be in some measure protected by his small squadron of horse, and gave orders for the attack. In open day the steel sword of the Castilians, gave them in close encounter such advantages, that in whatever direction they turned their force the impression was irresistible. But when the multitude gave way in one quarter, they closed in another, and the spirits of the soldiers sunk within them, as they beheld no end to their toil, and could entertain no hope of victory. Fortunately, Cortes beholding the standard borne by Cihuacatzin, the Mexican commander-in-chief, called to mind, that upon it depended the fate of every battle. Assembling around him a few of the bravest officers, whose horses were yet capable of service, he dashed forward towards it with an impetuosity that scattered or prostrated all before him. The Mexican General, clothed in rich armour, his helmet surmounted by a lofty and waving plume of brilliant feathers, and a gilded shield on his arm, was carried on a litter. The standard formed of golden net-work, pendant from a pointed staff, was firmly bound to his body, and rose ten palms above his head. Cortes, Sandoval, Alvarado, and Olid, strove who should first

attain this gaudy and important pageant.* It was Cortes' fortune to strike him first with his spear, and to overturn him upon the ground, when Juan de Salamanca, a brave soldier, who had kept up with his commander, dismounting quickly from his horse, put an end to his life. He tore off the plume from his head and presented it to the General, saying, "He who first strikes the Quarry merits the trophy."* The chiefs around the Mexican standard shared the fate of the leader. When he fell and the banner disappeared, the army as if by universal consent was dissolved, every warrior cast away his weapons, and fled from the field. Upon this day when every man fought with desperation the gallantry and activity of Cortes and Sandoval called forth the admiration of the troops and received their warmest acclamations. The Tlascalans, too, fought with their usual courage and in the pursuit made great slaughter of the flying foe; twenty thousand of whom are said to have fallen. The Spaniards abandoned the pursuit to collect the spoils of the field, which, from the practice of the Mexicans to decorate themselves in their richest ornaments, were so valuable as almost to compensate the soldiers for their loss during the sad retreat. But the victory was not bought without price. The greater portion of the Tlascalans perished; many of the Spaniards also were slain, and none escaped without a wound. The Spaniards were now reduced to four hundred and forty in number. Beside those slain previous to the retreat, there perished during it and the six following days, eight hundred and seventy; many of whom having been made prisoners, were sacrificed to the great Moloch of the temple.

* Charles V. with other rewards, gave Salamanca, a coat of arms with a plume or penache upon it.

IX. Scarce was the battle won, than new cares pressed upon the mind of Cortes. In the flood tide of his fortunes the Tlascalans had been faithful to their pledge of amity,—his successes gratified every passion of their hearts—gave them glory, vengeance, and plunder. Since his reverse, their fate was indissolubly bound to that of him and his Spaniards.—But, would their nation now receive them with cordiality, when stripped of a great portion of their power, wounded, wearied, and desponding? Or would they avail themselves of this opportunity, to avenge their first defeats and to obtain the valuable arms of the strangers? His doubts were injuries to the brave and generous republic. The principal chiefs met him upon their confines, and tendered him all that they could bestow; putting the whole force of the commonwealth at his command, and even the women excited him to take vengeance of the common enemy.*

X. During the interval necessary to refresh the troops, Cortes learned that the enmity of the Mexicans had not been confined to the Spaniards immediately under his command. A considerable detachment, marching from Chempoalla to the capital, had been cut off by the people of Tepejacac, as peace-offerings to the Mexicans, whom they thus appeased for the offence, they had committed in the reception of Cortes on his first march to Mexico. A smaller party returning from Tlascala to Vera Cruz, with the share of Mexican gold allotted to the garrison, had been surprised and destroyed in the mountains. Steadfast to his purpose, of reducing the empire of Mexico beneath the Spanish yoke, and which misfortune had in no way relaxed, he mourned the loss of every soldier; and as a mean of securing the fidelity of millions, to a few

* 8th July, 1520.

hundred invaders, he resolved to take ample vengeance for the death of every Spaniard who fell by the arms of the natives. Nor were the hopes he entertained unwarranted. Vera Cruz had remained unmolested. Chempoalla and the neighbouring districts, and the warlike Tlascalans were faithful to his interests, and his Spanish force, more experienced and better acquainted with the country, was quite as numerous as that, with which he had already penetrated to Mexico.

XI. Every act of his life tended to his great object. He courted the favor of the Tlascalans with great assiduity; distributing liberally among them the spoils of the field of Otompan. He drew a small supply of ammunition and two or three small field pieces from his stores at Vera Cruz. He despatched a faithful officer with four ships of Narvaez' fleet, to Hispaniola and Jamaica, to engage adventurers and purchase horses, gun powder, and other military stores. And to secure the command of the lake of Mexico, he prepared materials in the mountains of Tlascala, for building twelve brigantines, which he purposed to have carried thither. A new and formidable obstacle arose, in a quarter where he least expected it. The followers of Narvaez differed widely from his own troops. They were planters, rather than soldiers, who, had left productive estates in Cuba, in hopes of obtaining more valuable ones in Mexico; and they, had never anticipated and were unwilling to pay, the great cost of the purchase. Amid the disasters of Mexico, they cursed their easy faith in the General, which had led them into such perils: and such as had survived the retreat, had secured a considerable share of the abandoned gold and were unwilling to risk exposure to similar calamities. When Cortes' constancy to his design was developed, they remonstrated against it and earnestly and for-

mally required him to lead them back to Vera Cruz whence they might pass to Cuba. Neither his own eloquence, nor the entreaties of his soldiers could change their determination. The utmost he could effect, was to defer their departure, under a promise that at some more convenient juncture he would dismiss such as should desire it.

XII. It so happened that the detachment destroyed by the Tepejacans was composed chiefly of the companions of the discontented, and their desire for vengeance made them more readily submit to the active employment which he deemed proper to divert the minds of his soldiers, from discussing his present conduct and future plans. Having demanded and been refused satisfaction, by the confederacy of Tepejacac, he placed himself at the head of four hundred and twenty Spaniards, and six thousand Tlascalans, while Xicotencatl was levying an army of fifty thousand men. The number of troops assembled from Tlascala, Huexotzinco, and Cholula, has been estimated at one hundred and fifty thousand men. The town of Zacatepec was first reduced, then Acatzinco; each preceded by a hard contested battle. Tepejacac or Tepeaca, as it is termed by the Spaniards, fell without resistance. The capture of these cities more particularly claim our notice, because, the Spaniards here, and at this time, introduced into Anahuac the execrable system of *Repartimientos*, and consequent personal slavery. Cortes declared his prisoners slaves; and having set apart a fifth for the king, divided the rest among his countrymen and allies, branding those of the former with heated irons.*

XIII. He had scarce completed the reduction of Tepejacac when he received an entreaty from the Governor of Quauquechollan,† to come to his aid,

* Bernal Diaz.

† Called Guacacualco by Bernal Diaz.

and assist him in the expulsion of an army of thirty thousand Mexicans. This was a considerable city about four miles south of Tepejacac, containing near six thousand families, pleasantly situated, and alike fortified by nature and art. On one side was a steep and rocky mountain, and on another two parallel rivers. The whole city was surrounded with a strong wall of stone and lime, twenty feet high and twelve broad; upon which was a breast-work of three feet elevation. The entrances, four in number, were protected by doubling the ends of the walls in semicircles, such as we have described in the noted wall of Tlascala. Cortes immediately despatched De Olid, with thirteen horses, two hundred Spaniards, and thirty thousand auxiliaries. During the march from Tlascala, Olid grew suspicious of treachery, on the part of Quauhquechollan and Huexotzinco, and retired to Cholula, whence he sent some chiefs of the latter to Cortes for examination.* Their innocence becoming soon apparent, the General applied himself, successfully, to remove every vestige of dissatisfaction; and putting himself at their head with an additional hundred Spanish infantry, and ten horses, he marched for Cholula, resolved to take the enterprise upon himself. Before he arrived at Quauhquecholla, his auxiliary troops amounted to one hundred thousand men. With such a force without, aided by the insurgents, within, the city was soon taken. Itzocan, a small and well fortified town, situated in a deep and narrow valley, shared the same fate. Both professed submission to the Spanish crown, under whose dominion, the towns of Xalatzinco and Tecamachalco, were also soon after reduced. These advantages scarcely com-

* Clavigero. Bernal Diaz ascribes this retrograde movement to the mutiny of the followers of Narvaez.

pensed the grievous disaster sustained before Tochtepec, a large city upon the river Popaloapan. Salcedo, with eighty Spaniards, was sent to attack the Mexican garrison here, not one of whom returned to communicate the tidings of their defeat. Their deaths were soon afterwards avenged by Ordaz and D'Avila who captured the city. The successes of the Spaniards not only restored their confidence in their own superiority, but reproduced the awe and veneration among the natives which had so much favoured their first victories. Cortes became now the general arbiter of the Indian nations, by whose fiat, the succession to estates and honors was finally determined.

XIV. The timber for his vessels being nearly ready, he prepared to make a direct attack upon the city of Mexico, in aid of which his extraordinary good fortune again appeared. The Governor of Cuba, in full confidence of the success of Narvaez, had despatched two small vessels after him, with new instructions and supplies of men and military stores. They were artfully decoyed into Villa Rica and seized by the lieutenant of Cortes, who found little difficulty in persuading the soldiers to join the standard of the General. Soon after, three other ships of more considerable force came separately into the harbour. These formed part of an armament fitted out by De Garay, Governor of Jamaica, with a view to conquest and colonization in Mexico. His agents had made their attempt on the northern provinces, where the country was poor and the inhabitants consisted of the fierce and warlike Otomies. After a continued succession of disasters, famine compelled them to venture to Vera Cruz and cast themselves upon the charity of their countrymen, whose fame they had sought to rival, and in whose acquisitions they had designed

forcibly to participate.* They, too, were easily induced to join the standard of Cortes. A vessel also arrived from Spain, freighted with military stores, by private merchants, in hopes of a profitable market. Cortes eagerly purchased the cargo, and enlisted the crew. Thus, from various quarters, his army was augmented with one hundred and eighty men, and twenty horses,—a reinforcement of great importance, which enabled him to dismiss such of Narvaez' soldiers as continued with reluctance in his service, and whose longings for their homes rendered them spiritless soldiers, but, active and dangerous agitators. After their departure he still mustered five hundred and fifty infantry, of which four score were armed with muskets or cross-bows, forty horsemen, and nine field pieces; and the Tlascalans according to Herrera and Torquemada, supplied him with sixty thousand archers, ten thousand pikemen, and forty thousand swordsmen, commanded by the younger Xicotencatl.

XV. In the mean time whilst the Spaniards were recovering from their fatigues and making preparations to renew their attempt on Mexico, the inhabitants of that city were not careless of the means of resistance. The injuries they had sustained in their temples, houses, and roads, in the death of their king and many of the chief nobles, were very great; but scarce greater than those arising from the dissensions which sprang up among themselves. A Spanish party, too, of the friends and relatives of Montezuma, had been formed within their walls, whose extinction was not effected without much bloodshed.

Soon after the death of Montezuma, Cuitlahu-

atzin* was duly elected to the throne. He had been, as we have seen, the distinguished counsellor of his brother, and was the General of his armies. Like his predecessor he was remarkable for magnificence and liberality; and the gardens of Iztapalapan, formed a beautiful instance of his taste. His talents and sagacity have been commended by no less a judge than Cortes himself; his spirit was evident in the impatience with which he bore the arrogance of the invaders; and his military skill in the events of the *Noche Triste*. Had he lived, Cortes might not have triumphed in the conquest of the Mexican empire. If it were possible for the sacrifices of human victims ever to be holy, the captive Spaniards who bled on the altar at his coronation, must have been acceptable.

When this ceremony was over, he applied himself diligently, to repair the injuries the city had sustained, to conciliate his dependent states and concentrate their forces, promising those who would take up arms for the crown, exemption from future tribute. He with great ingenuity converted the weapons taken from the Spaniards, into others most effective against cavalry; heading his long lances with their swords and daggers. And he laboured earnestly to detach the Tlascalans from the Spanish interest; conjuring them by their common origin and religious faith, to bury in oblivion all causes of animosity between them and the Mexicans, and unite for the extirpation of an ungrateful race, who had caused the death of their benefactor, had bathed the country in blood, and with sacrilegious hands had violated the very sanctuaries; and would not fail, to subject *them* at last, to the same yoke which *they* were now aiding to impose upon others.

* Called by Diaz, Coadlavaca, and by Solis and Robertson, Quetlavaca.

The shrewd sense of this representation made a deep impression on the Tlascalan senate. The young Xicontencatl, who had not forgiven the Spaniards his own defeat, supported with much zeal the solicitation of the king of Mexico. But the influence of Maxicatzin and other elders, restrained the partizans of the young warrior and caused him to be confined, as an enemy of the state. Deep rooted enmity against the Mexicans and the temporary, but abundant wealth, which, had flowed into Tlascala through their gifted allies, closed the eyes of the republic against future dangers, predicted by a suffering foe. Xicotencatl owed his pardon to the intercession of Cortes; and the alliance of the Spaniards was consecrated by the baptism of the four chiefs of the republic, who adopted the christian faith.

XVI. Whilst Cuitlahuatzin was preparing for defence, with enterprise and judgment, that promised signal success, he was cut off by the small pox. This scourge had been introduced into Mexico, by a negro in the train of Narvaez. It now raged extensively in Anahuac, many places were depopulated, and many chiefs were numbered among its victims: among whom were the Governor of Cholula, and the friendly Maxicatzin of Tlascala. In the interchange of pestilence, even, the Europeans possessed the greatest power of doing evil. The Mexicans raised Quauhtemotzin, a nephew of the preceding king and son-in-law of Montezuma, to the throne. He was about twenty-five years old, and his spirit and intelligence had already made him a great favorite with the people.

XVII. Cortes commenced his march towards Mexico, on the 28th of December, six months after his disastrous retreat from that city. His design was to proceed to the city of Tezcoco, and there establish his head quarters until his brigantines

were ready to be launched. He chose this place with his usual excellence of judgment. The city was the second of the empire, was large, surrounded by a fertile country, and abounded with provisions. The buildings were good, the fortifications strong and susceptible of improvement, and it produced the greatest number of the best artizans in Mexico. Its dominions were adjacent to those of Tlascala, and rendered communication with his friends at all times easy, whilst by the lake he could observe and control the country upon its shores, and equip his vessels for the attack of the capital. He expected also to govern the whole kingdom of Acolhuacan, by the prince Ixlilxochitl. He had carried with him from Mexico, the prince Cuicuitzcatzin, whom Montezuma, at his instance, had placed on the throne, in the room of his unfortunate brother Cacamatzin. He escaped from Tlascala to Tezcuco, where Coanacotzin, the rightful heir, was then reigning, but speedily fell a prey to the jealousy of his brother and king. Ixlilxochitl, had a numerous party in the city, and Cortes meant to redeem the pledge formerly given to put him on the throne.

Cortes entered Tezcuco on the last day of the year, having surmounted some inconsiderable obstacles on the road and entertained some ambassadors of Coanacotzin, who approached him with a small golden banner, weighing thirty-two ounces; an emblem of peace and a present from the king, who invited him to take up his residence in his city. He was lodged in one of the palaces of the late king Nezahualcoyotl, sufficiently spacious to contain, conveniently, more than double his European force. Although his reception was attended with every outward show of respect, he could readily perceive that it was not cordial. And notwithstanding he endeavoured to restore confi-

dence, by prohibiting his troops to leave their quarters, he soon perceived the concourse of people in the streets to diminish, and the women and children to fly from the city; and he had the mortification to learn, on the next morning, that, Coanacotzin had fled by the lake to Mexico; it being his intention to make him captive. He immediately raised Ixtlilxochitl to the throne, and took under his protection the nobles of Huexotla, Coalichen and Atenco, towns so near to Tezcuco that they might have been deemed its suburbs. The young prince was king in name only; but that name was to Cortes a tower of strength, from which he commanded all the resources of the kingdom.

XVIII. Cortes, whilst awaiting the necessary means for besieging Mexico, employed his troops in excursions against the neighbouring cities and adjacent country. The beautiful town of Iztapalapan was laid waste, as much by the devoted patriotism of its inhabitants as by the arms of the Spaniards; the former breaking down the mounds which kept out the waters of the lake, in hopes that the flood might overwhelm their enemies. The cities of Misquic, Otonipan, and the state of Chalco joined his party. The king of the latter on his death-bed had recommended to his sons, to seek the protection of the General, and to consider him as their father. Most of the cities adjacent to Mexico, were originally capitals of small independent states, which, as we have seen,* were successively reduced to the Mexican yoke, which they bore with great impatience; and they listened with greedy ears to promises of freedom and the hopes of vengeance, by which Cortes enticed them to acknowledge the king of Castile as their sovereign, to supply the Spanish camp with provisions and to

* Vol. iii.

strengthen his army with their troops. Quauhthemotzin exerted himself to restrain and to punish their revolt; but the defection spread, and he had the pain to behold the very hands which should have defended the empire armed against it, and Cortes at the head of a numerous body of his subjects prepared to advance against the capital. A more detailed view of the operations of Cortes, the result of which we have just given, will tend to explain the nature and extent of the Mexican power, the obstacles in the way of its conquest, and the means by which the conqueror attained his end.

XIX. Having received information that the timber, sails, cordage and iron for the brigantines were ready for transportation, he sent Sandoval with two hundred Spaniards and fifteen horses, to protect the carriage; charging him to pass by Zoltepec to punish the inhabitants of that place, for the slaughter of forty-five Spaniards and three hundred Tlascalans, who had been sent to convoy some gold to Cortes whilst he occupied the city of Mexico. This duty performed, Sandoval commenced the labour, which excelled in magnitude that of Basco Nunes, of like character, across the Isthmus of Darien. The Tlascalans furnished eight thousand *Tamenes* or labourers, to carry the materials on their shoulders, and fifteen thousand warriors to defend them.* The Tamenes occupied the centre, one body of warriors the front, and another the rear, with considerable parties on the flanks. To each party, some Spaniards were assigned to assist in case of danger and to preserve regularity and subordination. Thus distributed, the convoy extended in narrow passes over a line of six miles. Parties of

* Clavigero says 30,000 warriors, Bernal Diaz, 10,000, Herrera, 180,000.

Mexicans frequently appeared, hovering around them upon the neighbouring heights, but perceiving the excellent order which was preserved, did not venture to molest them. Thus thirteen vessels with the necessary equipment were carried, without the aid of beasts of burthen or carriages, a distance of sixty miles.

XX. Whilst the brigantines were being put together, Cortes, with the reinforcement of auxiliaries he now received, resolved to make the circuit of the great lakes, and to reduce the cities dependent upon Mexico before he commenced the siege of the capital. In this progress, he assaulted and took Xaltocan, a strong town in the lake, connected, like Mexico, with the main land by dykes; the beautiful cities of Quauhtitlan, Tenajocca and Azcapozalco, fell into his hands without a blow, the inhabitants intimidated by the fate of Xaltocan, having deserted them. His march was checked at Tlacopan, from which, after six days continued combat, he was compelled to retire. With a portion of his army he entered upon the dyke leading thence to Mexico to review the scene of his great disaster; a scene which again had like to have proved fatal to him; for being suddenly attacked in front and rear, he was unable to extricate himself without considerable loss. His allies, becoming embarrassed with their spoils, obtained leave to carry them to their homes, and he returned for a short period to Tezcoco. Sandoval, after the return of Cortes, marched with twenty horse, three hundred Spanish infantry and a large army of auxiliaries to the relief of Chalco, threatened by a numerous Mexican force: but finding the city strengthened by its allies, he turned his arms against Huaxtepec, a strong place in the mountains, fifteen miles south of Chalco, overthrowing in his way two large bodies of the enemy. The town which was

then famed for its excellent manufactures of cotton and admirable gardens, was easily taken. But Jacapichtla proved a more difficult conquest: Seated on the summit of a rugged mountain, almost inaccessible to cavalry, and whose ascent was attended with great danger to the infantry, from the showers of darts and arrows which filled the air, and the masses of rock which came bounding with irresistible force down its sides. The Indian allies hesitated to scale the mountain, until, emulous of the Spanish example, the Tlascalans followed with equal courage and activity. The enemy was driven from the town with such slaughter that a small stream near it, was so tinted with blood, the heated and thirsty soldier could not for more than an hour drink of it. When the tidings of the fall of this place reached Mexico, a body of twenty thousand men, in two thousand boats, were despatched against Chalco; and Sandoval just returned to Tezcuco with his wearied and wounded troops, was commanded by Cortes to march thither, and unjustly reprimanded for not having foreseen and prevented this attack. His presence was however unnecessary; the enemy was repelled by the Chalchese and their allies; and the General, repenting the injury he had done his meritorious captain, endeavoured to efface his chagrin by renewed marks of confidence and esteem.

On the 5th of April,* Cortes himself again set forth, with three hundred Spaniards and a large native force, and after some inconsiderable skirmishing, captured the town of Quauhnahuac, the capital of the Tlahuicas, situated more than thirty miles south of Mexico. Thence, he marched to Xochimilco, the fourth city of the empire, renowned for its beauty, whence it had its name; signify-

ing the “field of flowers.” It was well defended by ditches and dykes, and cost the General a severe battle before it was captured, in which he was rescued from the hands of the enemy by the courage of a Tlascalan warrior and two of his own domestics. His horse was slain, and he was compelled to fight on foot with his lance, but he did not escape without wounds. Clavigero assures us, that, on this, as on other occasions, Cortes might have been slain by the enemy, had they not been desirous to take him alive, that they might make so appropriate a sacrifice to the god of war. The Mexicans, highly valuing the possession of this city, attempted its relief, and full three days were spent by the Spaniards in its reduction. Thence he marched to Cojahuacan, six miles from the capital, which he caused to be set on fire; and by Tlacopan and other towns to Tezcuco; having in this expedition, made a circuit of all the lakes of the Mexican vale, and observed with the eye of an able commander the whole field of his operations.

XXI. About this period, four ships arrived at Vera Cruz, from Hispaniola, with two hundred soldiers, eighty horses, two battering cannon and a large supply of ammunition and arms. The brigantines were completed; and to facilitate the launching, Cortes had employed a vast number of his auxiliaries in deepening the small rivulet which runs by Tezcuco into the lake, and forming it into a canal, two miles in length. On the 28th of April, all the Spanish troops together with the allies, were drawn up on the banks of the canal, and with extraordinary military pomp, rendered more solemn by the celebration of religious rites, the vessels were launched. As they fell down the canal, Father Olmedo blessed and gave each its name. Every eye followed them with wonder and hope, until they entered the lake, when under full sail, they

bore away before the wind, accompanied by general shouts of joy.

XXII. Every thing appeared to promise a happy issue to the enterprise when its success was most endangered. The leaven of discontent, whose workings among the troops of Narvaez had hitherto so much perplexed Cortes, had not been entirely removed by the departure of such as had returned to Cuba. Those who remained beheld with dread and dismay the labours and dangers which they were about to incur in the siege of the city, from which they saw no means of deliverance, but by the death of the commander-in-chief. Antonio Villefagna, a private soldier, bold, intriguing, and devotedly attached to Velasques, artfully fomented the disaffection. His quarters became the rendezvous of the malcontents, where the plot was matured, the officers nominated for the command of the army in case of success, and even the distribution of the spoil allotted. The conspirators bound themselves to fidelity by the most solemn oaths. But on the eve before the appointed day, one of Cortes' ancient followers, who had been seduced into the conspiracy, repented, and betrayed it to the General. He repaired instantly to Villefagna's quarters, accompanied by some of his trusty officers and seized the astounded traitor, from whose bosom he tore a paper containing the particulars of the conspiracy, signed by himself. Impatient to know the extent of the defection, Cortes retired to read it. He found there names which filled him with surprise and sorrow; but aware that a strict scrutiny might prove dangerous at this juncture, he confined his judicial enquiries to Villefagna alone. The proofs of his guilt were manifest, and on the judgment of a court, summoned for the occasion, he was hanged. Many throbbing bosoms were present at this execution; but the admirable

prudence of the General stilled their beatings, by the politic declaration, that the names of the other conspirators were unknown to him, that the traitor at the moment of arrest, had torn and swallowed a paper, which probably contained them, and that he possessed such constancy as to conceal the names of his accomplices under the severest tortures. This wise dissimulation enabled him to protect himself against the disaffected, whilst they, flattering themselves that their guilt was unknown, became active and zealous in his service, to avert suspicion.*

XXIII. Upon a review of the army and its equipment, there appeared eighty-six horses, and more than eight hundred infantry; fifty thousand Tlascalans under the command of Xicotencatl and Chichimecatl, both young and aspiring commanders, but not alike affected to the Spanish cause; and other auxiliaries from various tribes, making the whole amount of the Indian force, more than two hundred thousand men;† one thousand Castilian pounds of gunpowder; three battering cannon, of iron, and fifteen smaller ones of brass, with an abundant supply of balls. On May 20th, Cortes classified and distributed this immense force, and appointed its commanders. One division destined to advance on Mexico by the dyke of Tepejacac, was given to Sandoval; another, directed to proceed by Tlacoapan, was commanded by Alvarado; and a third, under De Olid, was instructed to possess itself of the road of Cojohuacan. Cortes reserved for himself, in spite of the remonstrances of his captains and soldiers, as the station of the greatest importance and danger, the conduct of the brigantines,

* Solis. B. Diaz. Herrera. Robertson. Clavigero.

† This computation is that of Alfonso d'Ojeda, their immediate commander.—Clavigero.

each armed with one small cannon, and manned by twenty-five Spaniards.

An event occurred at this time, which strongly pourtrays the prompt, resolute and uncompromising character of Cortes. Whilst the Tlascalan troops were on the march to the post assigned them, it was discovered that Xicotencatl, their commander-in-chief, had deserted them. The cause of his withdrawal is variously reported. According to Clavigero, it was disgust at maltreatment of a relative by a Spanish soldier; but Diaz ascribes his desertion, to an opportunity which was now afforded him, of seizing the possessions of his colleague Chichimecatl, and his hatred of the Spaniards. Upon the information of Chichimecatl, Cortes despatched several chieftains to request his return. He replied, that had his father, and the other princes of Tlascala pursued his advice, the nation would not now be the slaves of a handful of foreigners; whom he would no longer serve. Cortes sent a party of horse and other Tlascalan chiefs, with orders to arrest the fugitive and hang him instantly; which were punctually obeyed, in a small town belonging to Tezcuco. His death was publicly proclaimed as the reward of desertion and sedition. His countrymen were much intimidated by the boldness of the act, which also had a good effect, in restraining the irregularity of the native troops. His family and property were confiscated to the king of Spain. In the first, were his thirty wives; and in the last a large quantity of gold.

XXIV. As Alvarado and Olid proceeded towards their posts they broke down the aqueducts of Chalpotepec, and thereby deprived the city of Mexico of fresh water. The towns to which they were respectively ordered had been deserted by their inhabitants, who fled to the

capital, where Quauhtimotzin had collected the chief force of the empire. Before their separation, however, those commanders made a joint attempt to force one of the passes across the dyke of Tlacopan, from which they were driven with considerable loss. In the mean time, Cortes made trial of his navy in aiding Sandoval in a second assault on Iztapalapan. The vessels ran upon the base of a small conical hill which rises from the lake, and which was now covered with foes, all of whom perished under the Spanish sword; not, however, before a signal had been made summoning an immense fleet of boats, which rowed boldly to the charge, whilst the brigantines, becalmed, could not advance to meet them. But a breeze soon after springing up, the sails were spread, and the Spanish barks broke through the lines of the canoes with ease, oversetting some and dispersing others with signal slaughter.* Sandoval captured Iztapalapan, and thence proceeded to Tepejacac.

XXV. From that time, Cortes remained master of the lake; and the brigantines not only preserved a communication between the Spaniards in their different and distant stations, but were employed to cover the causeways and keep off the canoes when they attempted to annoy the troops as they advanced towards the city. He formed the vessels into three divisions, appointing one to each of the stations, whence an attack was to be made against the city, with orders to second the operations of the officer in command. Before this disposition was made of the fleet, he successfully led it to the attack of the position called Xoloc, at the junction of the dykes leading from Cojohuacan and Tlacopan; the most desirable point for offence, from which he could speedily communicate with two

* B. Diaz. Solis. Clavigero. Robertson.

main divisions of his army, and where he soon afterwards established a fourth.

From these points he pushed on the attack against the city with equal vigour; but in a manner so different from the usual conduct of sieges in regular war, that he himself seems afraid, that it would appear no less improper than singular, to persons unacquainted with his situation. Each morning his troops assaulted the barricades, which the enemy had erected on the causeways, forced their way over the trenches which they had dug, and through the canals where the bridges were broken down, and endeavoured to penetrate into the heart of the city, in hopes of obtaining some decisive advantage, which might force the enemy to surrender, and terminate the war at once; but when the obstinate valour of the Mexicans rendered the efforts of the day ineffectual, the Spaniards retired in the evening to their former quarters. Thus their toil and danger were in a measure continually renewed; the one party repairing at night what the other destroyed in the day. Dr. Robertson observes, that Cortes preserved this plan of operations for a month, from unwillingness to expose his handful of men by a lodgement within the city, and that he was extremely desirous to preserve the city, as the capital of his conquests and a monument of his glory. But, in truth, he had no choice. The Mexicans in their defence displayed valour not at all inferior to that of the Spaniards; and when the disparity of weapons and science is considered, a fortitude still more admirable. On land, on water, by night, and by day, one furious conflict succeeded to another. From the description of one of these attacks we may judge of others. On the third day after Cortes had obtained the command of the lake, he made the first attempt to penetrate the city. The greater part of his cavalry,

three hundred infantry and an innumerable host of allies, attended by seven brigantines, issued from the point of Xoloc. The troops found the ditches opened, and entrenchments thrown up, behind which, appeared the enemy, well prepared to meet them. The foe however was driven in, the obstacles surmounted, and the Spaniards reached the principal square of Tenochtitlan; but Cortes would not suffer them to proceed further, whilst the ditches and the trenches still subsisted. Thousands of the allies were engaged in filling the one and demolishing the other; and, in the mean time, parties were employed in setting fire to the temples, palaces and principal dwellings, and among others that in which the Spaniards lately resided, and the celebrated palace of birds of Montezuma. This work of destruction was carried on amid incessant combat; and the retreat was attended with the same labour and peril as had accompanied the advance. Similar efforts were made by Sandoval and Alvarado in their quarters. On the next day Cortes issued forth early in the morning, in order to prevent the Mexicans from re-opening the ditches and raising the ramparts; but he found those labours accomplished and the enemy again prepared to defend them. In these conflicts several Spaniards were killed, more were wounded, and all were ready to sink under the toils of unintermitting service, rendered more intolerable by the injuries of the season; the periodical rains having now set in with their usual violence.*

The Spanish officers and soldiers wearied, at length, with so many fruitless combats, earnestly conjured the General to unite all his forces in one decisive blow, which might terminate their perils and their labours. They proposed to penetrate to

* Clavigero. Robertson.

the centre of Tlatelolco, where the great body of the Mexican warriors was assembled, and by one bold effort, either to destroy or compel them to capitulate. Cortes, who well knew the danger of the attempt, yielded reluctantly to their counsel. He sent instructions to Alvarado and Sandoval to advance with their divisions to a general assault; and marched himself with twenty-five horses, a portion of the infantry, and more than one hundred thousand allies. Animated by his presence and the expectation of some decisive event, the Spaniards pushed forward with irresistible impetuosity. They broke through one barricade after another, forced their way over ditches and canals, and having entered the city gained ground incessantly, in spite of the multitude and ferocity of their opponents. Notwithstanding the rapidity of his progress Cortes did not forget to provide for retreat; and appointed Julien de Alderete, the king's treasurer, and a captain of chief note in the troops he had received from Hispaniola, to fill up the breaches in the causeway as the main body advanced. That officer deeming it inglorious to be thus employed, whilst his companions were in the career of victory, neglected this important duty to mingle with the combatants.

Quauhtimotzin was immediately informed of this omission, and was aware of the consequences of the error, of which, with admirable presence of mind, he prepared to take advantage. He commanded the troops posted in front to slacken their efforts, to allure the Spaniards on, whilst he despatched a large body of chosen warriors, some by land and others by water, towards a great breach in the causeway, which had thus been left open. Suddenly, the horn of the god Painalton sounded, the signal, well understood, of victory or death; and every Mexican rushed upon the enemy with the most desperate valour. The shock was irresistible,

before which the Spaniards began to retire, first, leisurely and in good order, but, as the enemy pressed on, and their own impatience of escape increased, the terror and confusion became so general, that when they arrived at the gap in the causeway, Spaniards and Indians, horsemen and footmen, plunged in promiscuously; while the Mexicans rushed upon them fiercely from every side, their light canoes carrying them through shoals which the brigantines could not approach. In vain did Cortes attempt to stop and rally his flying troops; and he laboured to save some of those who had thrown themselves into the water. But whilst thus employed, with more attention to their situation than his own, six Mexican captains, suddenly seized him, and were hurrying him off in triumph; and though two of his officers rescued him at the expense of their own lives, he received several dangerous wounds before he could break loose. Above sixty Spaniards perished in the route; and still more afflictive, forty of them fell alive into the hands of an enemy never known to spare a captive. The other divisions were also repelled after a severe struggle, but having been more careful to preserve the means of retreat, sustained less injury. In this attack the whole loss exceeded eighty men.

The approach of night delivered the Spaniards from the assaults of the enemy, but brought a grievance, scarce less tolerable, the noise of their barbarous triumph and the horrible festival with which they celebrated the victory. Every quarter of the city was illuminated; the great temple shone with such peculiar splendour, that the Spaniards could plainly see the people in motion, and the priests busy in hastening the preparations for the death of the prisoners. Through the gloom, they fancied that they discerned their companions as they were stripped naked and compelled to dance before the

image of the god to whom they were to be offered. They heard the shrieks of those who were sacrificed, and thought, that, they could distinguish each unhappy victim, by the well known sound of his voice. Imagination added to what they saw or heard, and augmented its horror.

Cortes, who besides the common grief, was oppressed with that peculiar to his station, could not like others relieve his mind by giving vent to his anguish. He was obliged to assume an air of tranquillity in order to revive the spirit and hopes of his followers. The juncture indeed required an extraordinary exertion of fortitude. The Mexicans elate with victory, sallied out next morning to attack his quarters with more than their usual courage. But they did not rely on the efforts of their own arms alone. They sent the heads of the Spaniards whom they had sacrificed, to the chiefs of the adjacent provinces, with assurances that Huitzilopochtli, appeased by the blood of the invaders, which had been so plentifully shed upon his altars, had declared with an audible voice, that in eight days time those hated enemies should be finally destroyed, and peace and prosperity re-established in the empire.

A prediction uttered with such confidence and so void of ambiguity, gained universal credit among a people prone to superstition. The zeal of the provinces which had already declared against the Spaniards augmented; and several which had hitherto remained inactive, took arms with enthusiastic ardour to execute the decree of the gods. The Indian auxiliaries of Cortes, accustomed to venerate the same deities as the Mexicans, and to receive the responses of the priests with the same implicit faith, abandoned the Spaniards as men devoted to certain destruction. Even the fidelity of the Tlascalans was shaken, and the Spanish troops were left

almost alone in their stations. Cortes, unable otherwise to dispel the fears of his confederates, took advantage of the imprudence of the prophets in limiting so closely the time for the fulfilment of their prediction, to demonstrate its falsity, by suspending all military operations against the city during the period marked out by the oracle. Under cover of the brigantines, which kept the enemy at a distance, his troops lay in safety notwithstanding daily attacks, and the fatal term expired without any disaster. But during this period, Sandoval, who, on account of the wounds of Cortes, had the general command, made a successful excursion against the Matlatzincas, one of the most warlike tribes of the country, and the Captain Andrea de Tapia, another, against the Malinalchese; both of which tribes soon after joined the Spanish standard. The Tlascalan General, also, selected this period to display his own and his peoples' courage by an attack on the city; in which he equalled the labour of the Spaniards and proudly received their praises.

XXVI. When the falsity of the prophecy became apparent, the allies, ashamed of their credulity, returned to their station. And other nations, inferring that the gods had finally determined to withdraw their protection from the Mexicans, joined the Spanish standard. The force of Cortes thus became so great, that Clavigero assures us, he might have employed in the siege of Mexico, more souls than Xerxes sent against Greece. But as a small portion only of these myriads could act at a time, upon the narrow causeways, he found it necessary to change his plan of operations. Don Carlos, as he had been named on his christian baptism, a younger brother of Ixlilxochitl, who had much distinguished himself by his conduct and courage, and who had greatly contributed to the safety of Cortes on his late unfortunate retreat, had suggested to

him, the impolicy of his exhausting efforts; whilst by converting the siege into a blockade, he might by patience alone inevitably reduce the city and preserve all its temples and other beautiful edifices. This judicious advice was partially followed; but Cortes resolved to continue his attacks upon the city by gradual advances, and raze to the foundation such portions of it as he successfully gained. Day by day the Mexicans were thus forced to retire within stricter limits, disputing with obstinate resolution every inch of ground. The Spaniards not only varied the mode of attack, but changed their weapons; adopting the Chinantlan spear, whereby they repelled with less danger the assault of the Mexicans. Famine now began to prey on the inhabitants of the city. The Spanish vessels intercepted the supplies by water, whilst the immense number of auxiliaries shut up the avenues by land. The large stores which the king had prudently collected were exhausted by the multitudes which had crowded into the capital for its defence. All classes felt the utmost distress from hunger, and their sufferings brought on their usual concomitant, infectious and mortal distempers, which filled up the measure of their woes.

XXVII. But, under the pressure of so many and such various evils, the spirit of Quauhtimotzin remained firm and unsubdued. He rejected, by the counsel of his priests, after solemn consultation with them and his nobles, the many overtures of peace from Cortes, resolving to bury himself beneath the ruin of his country rather than submit to foreign oppressors. That ruin was visibly hastened by every day's operations and advanced with rapid strides. The women and the children covered the streets with their emaciated and dead bodies. The warrior, enfeebled by hunger, could scarce raise his lightest arms, and cursed from behind his en-

trenchment, the slow progress of his enemies, the children of the sun, who, unlike their parent, could not complete their course in a single day. At length,* the three divisions penetrated the great square in the centre of the city and made a secure lodgement there. Three fourths of the city were now reduced, and in ruins; and on this fatal day forty thousand Mexicans are computed to have fallen, chiefly beneath the weapons of the auxiliaries, whose rage for blood no effort of Cortes could allay. The remaining quarter was so closely pressed, that it could not long withstand the assailants, who attacked it from their new station, with superior advantage and more assured expectation of success. The Mexican nobles, solicitous to save the life of Quauhtimotzin, prevailed on him to retire from a place where resistance was now vain, that he might rouse the more distant provinces to arms, and maintain there, a more successful struggle with the enemy. To facilitate his departure, they attempted to amuse Cortes with overtures of submission; but he, suspecting their intention, and aware of the importance of preventing it, appointed Sandoval, on whose vigilance he could most rely, to take command of the brigantines, with strict injunctions to watch every motion of the enemy. Attentive to his charge, Sandoval observing some large canoes, filled with people, rowing with extraordinary rapidity across the lake, instantly, gave the signal to chase. Garcia Holguin, who commanded the swiftest vessel, soon overtook them, and was preparing to fire on the foremost canoe, which seemed to carry some one whom all the rest followed and obeyed. At once, the rowers dropped their oars, and all on board, throwing down their arms conjured him not to kill the emperor. Quauhtimot-

* July, 27th.

zin, with dignified composure, gave himself up to the captors, requesting the only grace, that no insult might be offered to his wife and children. The Spaniards, struck with the most imposing spectacle in the world, that, of greatness, after exhausting its power of resistance, submitting patiently to misfortune, treated their prisoner with profound respect. When conducted to Cortes, he appeared neither with the sullen fierceness of a barbarian, nor the dejection of a suppliant. "I have done," said he, addressing the General, "the duty of a prince. I have defended my people to the last extremity. The life which can no longer avail them is unworthy of preservation. The only boon I crave at your hands is a stroke of this dagger," laying his hand on the weapon of Cortes, "which may end it."

XXVIII. As soon as the fate of their sovereign was known, the resistance of the Mexicans ceased, and Cortes took possession of the small part of the capital which remained undestroyed.* Thus terminated the siege of Mexico; the most memorable event in the conquest of America. It continued seventy-five days, scarce one of which passed without some extraordinary effort of attack and defence. The slaughter and misery attending it has scarce been surpassed. "What I am going to mention is truth," says the *naïve* Bernal Diaz, "and I say amen to it. I have read of the destruction of Jerusalem, but I cannot conceive, that the mortality there exceeded that of Mexico; for all the people from the distant provinces which belonged to this empire, concentrated themselves here, where they mostly died. The streets, the squares, the houses, and the courts of Tlatelolco, were covered with dead bodies; we could not step without treading on them;

* August 13, 1621.

the lake and canals were filled with them; and the stench was intolerable. For this reason our troops, immediately after the capture of the royal family, retired to their former quarters; Cortes himself was for some time ill from the effect of it."

As the struggle here was more obstinate, it was likewise more equal, than any between the inhabitants of the old and new world. The ability of Quauhtimotzin, the number of his troops, the peculiar situation of his capital so far counterbalanced the superiority of the Spaniards in arms and discipline, that without the aid of the natives they could not have accomplished their enterprise. But the assistance of the auxiliaries does not in our opinion detract from the merit of Cortes. He entered upon a large and populous empire with five hundred men, unacquainted with the language, manners, customs, and country. He had by the force of his genius, and the good fortune which that genius knew how to use, penetrated the polity of the several nations, converted their jealousies and dissensions into the most efficient weapons against themselves and for the promotion of his own interests, and had finally subverted the thrones of the chief states of Anahuac in despite of some notable imprudences and severe reverses.

The fate of Mexico is another lesson on the fragility of power sustained only by force. But subtracting from the Mexican people their horrid superstition,—their noble defence of the city, their active courage, admirable fortitude and constancy, and their courtesy give an elevation to their character not inferior to that of their enemies, and confute the calumnies of historians, who have for years deprived them of the honors they so truly merit.

CHAPTER VI.

- I. Disappointment of the Spaniards in relation to the treasure found in Mexico....II. Torture of Quauhtimotzin and the king of Tlacopan....III. General submission of the provinces....IV. Christopher de Tapia appointed to supersede Cortes—is induced to return to St. Domingo....V. The proceedings of Cortes are confirmed by the Geronymite fathers—He sends new deputies to Spain—Is appointed Captain General and Governor of Mexico....VI. His measures to consolidate his conquest....VII. Subjection of the kingdom of Mechoacan....VIII. Cortes proposes to make discoveries in the Southern ocean....IX. Conquests of Sandoval....X. Of Guatemala by Alvarado....XI. Enterprise of De Garay—Conquest of Panuco by Cortes....XII. Barbarous execution perpetrated by Sandoval at Panuco....XIII. Expedition of De Olid to Honduras....XIV. Of Gil Gonzales D'Avila....XV. Discovery of Nicaragua....XVI. Gonzales enters Honduras....XVII. He prepares a new expedition....XVIII. Enterprise of Francisco Hernandez to Cordova, under the direction of Pedrarias....XIX. Conflict between Hernandez and Gonzales....XX. Hernandez is put to death by Pedrarias....XXI. Las Casas is sent by Cortes to punish the defection of de Olid—Death of de Olid....XXII. Resolution of Cortes to proceed to Honduras....XXIII. State of Mexico....XXIV. Preparations of Cortes for his journey....XXV. Present from Cortes to the Emperor....XXVI. His journey to Honduras....XXVII. He puts Quauhtimotzin and the other Indian kings to death....XXVIII. His proceedings at Honduras.

....XXIX. *Dissensions in Mexico....XXX. Indecision of Cortes—His return to Mexico.*

I. The exultation of the Spaniards on the capture of the city was excessive, but was soon allayed by the disappointment of those hopes which had sustained them through so many labours and dangers. The whole of the treasure, they were enabled to collect, amounted only to one hundred and thirty thousand pesos; a sum much inferior to that, which they had formerly divided. Quauhtimotzin, unable to defend his kingdom and his treasures, resolving that his conquerors should not possess the latter, had caused the remnant of the wealth amassed by his ancestors to be thrown into the lake; and the Indian auxiliaries, whilst the Spaniards were engaged in conflicts with the enemy, had carried off the most valuable part of the spoil. Hence, the sum to be divided among the soldiers was so small, that many rejected it with disdain; all murmured; some against Cortes and his confidants, whom, they, not without cause, suspected of having secretly appropriated to their own use a large portion of the riches which should have been brought into the common stock—others against Quauhtimotzin, whom they accused of obstinacy in refusing to discover the place where he had cast his treasure.*

II. Every effort of the General to soothe the angry soldiers, proving vain, he, from a solicitude to check the growing spirit of discontent, gave way to a deed, which stained the glory of all his great actions. Regardless of the former dignity of Quauhtimotzin and the reverence due to the virtues he had displayed, he subjected the emperor and his chief minister and favorite the king of Tlacopan to torture, in order to compel a discovery of

* Bernal Diaz. Solis. Herrera. Robertson.

the subtracted treasure. The soals of their feet were bathed with oil, and they were suspended over a glowing fire. Quauhtimotzin bore this refined torment with invincible fortitude; but his fellow sufferer overcome by the violence of the anguish, turned his eyes upon his master as if imploring permission to reveal what he knew. The former, with a glance of authority mingled with scorn, asked, "Am I reposing on a bed of flowers?" Overawed by the reproach, the favorite persevered in his dutiful silence. Cortes, ashamed of a scene so horrid, rescued the royal victims from the hands of the torturers, and prolonged lives reserved for new indignities and sufferings.*

III. The fate of the capital, as both parties had foreseen, decided that of the empire. The provin-

* This well told tale is from Dr. Robertson, who adds, that the favorite expired under torture, but does not give us his authority for the statement. It is wholly inconsistent with the relation of Bernal Diaz, who mentions the torture of the king of Mexico and his "*confidential friend*," the king of Tacuba, (Tlacopan,) at the instance of the Spanish soldiers and against the wishes of Cortes. But neither died under the torture; and both confessed, that they had, four days previous to the surrender of the city, thrown the treasure into the lake, together with the arms which had been taken from the Spaniards. The place pointed out by Quauhtimotzin was carefully searched, in vain. In a deep pond at his palace, was found a sun of gold similar to that presented by Montezuma to the Spaniards, with many ornaments of inconsiderable value, his private property. The king of Tacuba declared, that he had gold at a residence near his capital, and that he would point out the spot where it was buried. When taken there, however, he averred that he possessed no gold, but had made the assertion in hopes that he might die upon the road. "The fact is," continues Diaz, "that the treasury was diminished to a mere trifle before it came into Quauhtimotzin's hands; and I, and many others who saw it at first, knew that it appeared to be then worth twice what it was, when brought out to have his majesty's share deducted; I observed many articles of remarkable and curious workmanship missing at that time. *They were taken for the public service.* Most of the gold went to the coffers of the king of Spain, in exchange for prisoners purchased by the soldiers for slaves."

ces submitted one after the other to the conquerors; and the most wealthy were apportioned among the principal Spanish officers for exploration. The books or tribute rolls of the Mexican kings enabled them to learn the products of the several parts of the empire, and to appreciate with tolerable correctness, the wealth that might be drawn from them. No mines were found in the Vale of Mexico; nor did it produce the valuable articles of cacao and cotton; the countries in which these abounded were the first objects of attention, for the conquerors. In employing his officers and troops in these expeditions, the politic General rid himself of those who were disposed to look too nearly into his measures.

IV. Whilst Cortes was acquiring such extensive territories for his native country and preparing the way for future conquests, he was not only destitute of authority from his sovereign, but was regarded as a disobedient and seditious subject. The affairs of the Indies being administered in Spain, by the Bishop of Burgos, who was much devoted to Velasques, Portecarero and Montejo were very coldly received; the presents they brought, were delayed, and the letters of Cortes, of the municipal authorities of Villa Rica, and of the army were suppressed; and the young Charles, then resident in Flanders, was kept in ignorance of the enterprise and merits of his subjects. By the influence of Fonseca, the conduct of Cortes, in assuming the Government of New Spain, was declared an irregular usurpation in contempt of the royal authority; and Christopher de Tapia, royal inspector of St. Domingo received a commission empowering him to supersede Cortes, to seize his person, to confiscate his effects, to make a strict scrutiny into his proceedings, and to transmit the result of all his inquiries to the Council of the Indies, of which

the bishop was president. A few weeks after the reduction of Mexico, Tapia landed at Vera Cruz with the royal mandate to strip its conqueror of his power, and to treat him as a criminal. Alvarado, then Governor of the town, respectfully declined to acknowledge his commission, but referred him to Cortes, who, when apprised of his arrival, recalled his principal officers from their several expeditions, and commanded them to meet the royal lieutenant on his way to Mexico. With many compliments and much ceremony, they persuaded him to go to Chempoalla; where having verified his commission in due form, they placed it upon their heads in token of respect and submission. But, these public demonstrations of obedience covered the measures which Cortes privately took to defeat the object of Tapia's commission. He involved him and his followers in a multiplicity of negotiations and conferences, in which he had sometimes recourse to threats, but more frequently to bribes and promises, and at length prevailed on him to abandon a province he was incompetent to govern.*

V. Soon after the departure of Tapia, Alonza D'Avila, whom Cortes had sent to Saint Domingo, after the defeat of Narvaez, in order to make a favorable impression of his views on the royal commissioners, the Geronymite Friars, returned with their sanction of his proceedings. But still the tenure by which he held his power was too precarious to permit him to remain at ease; and he resolved to send D'Avila, and Anthony de Quinones to Spain, with a pompous account of his conquests, further specimens of the productions of the country, and rich presents to the king; requesting in recompence for his services, the royal approbation of his

conduct and the government of the country which he and his followers had added to the crown of Castile. His agents left Vera Cruz on the 20th of December; but stopping at Tecera, Quinones lost his life in a duel, growing out of some amatory intrigue. In the voyage thence to Europe, D'Avila, with his ship and treasure, fell into the hands of a French privateer, and was carried to France; and though no war actually existed, the French monarch confiscated the treasure, as a small portion of his interest in the world which Spain and Portugal had divided between them. D'Avila, however, found means to communicate with his friends in Spain, and De Ordaz and the relatives of Cortes, succeeded in making a favorable impression for the General, at Court. The juncture was particularly auspicious. The internal commotions in Spain, which had disquieted the commencement of Charles' reign, were just appeased. The ministers had leisure to turn their attention to foreign affairs. The account of Cortes' victories filled his countrymen with admiration. The extent and value of his conquests, were subjects of vast interest. The stain he had contracted by the mode in which he acquired power, was effaced by the splendid and meritorious use he had made of it, and the public mind revolted at the idea of censure on one whose services entitled him to the highest marks of distinction. Charles who at this time arrived in Spain, adopted the opinions of his subjects; and notwithstanding the claims of Velasques and the partial representations of the Bishop of Burgos, he appointed Cortes, Captain General and Governor of New Spain; judging that no one could so well maintain the royal authority, and establish order among his Spanish and Indian subjects, as he, whom the one had long been accustomed to obey, and the other to dread and respect.*

* Robertson, Bernal Diaz, Herrera.

VI. Even before his jurisdiction received this legal sanction, Cortes ventured to exercise the power it conferred; and by various arrangements endeavoured to render his conquest, a secure and beneficial acquisition to his country. He determined to establish the seat of Government in its ancient station, and to raise Mexico from its ruins; and having conceived high ideas concerning the future grandeur of the state of which he was laying the foundation, he began to rebuild the capital on a plan which has gradually formed one of the most magnificent cities of the New World.

In this labour he derived much aid from the natives, particularly those of Tezcoco, who were excellent mechanics and took great delight, under the direction of their princes, in observing and acquiring the use of the iron instruments and labour-saving machines of the Spanish artisans. The great piety of Cortes and his followers, directed their first attention to the erection of churches; and in their unenlightened zeal, they used in some instances, especially, in the great church, the idols of stone which had filled the Mexican temples, for the foundations. The fame of the works in the city, and the encouragement given to settle there, attracted so many people, that provisions became scarce and pestilence ensued. More than one hundred thousand houses, it is said, were erected in a wonderful short space of time, among which, those in the Spanish quarter were of durable materials and of large dimensions. The palace erected by Cortes himself has been much celebrated for its extent and magnificence, and is at this day among the most conspicuous buildings of the city.

At the same time he employed skilful persons to search for mines in different parts of the country, and opened some, richer than any which the Spaniards had hitherto discovered in America. He des-

patched his principal officers into the remote provinces, and encouraged them to settle there, not only by bestowing on them large tracts of land, but by granting them the same dominion over the Indians and the same right to their service which the Spaniards had assumed in the islands.

VII. In his efforts to extend his dominion, fortune continued still to favor the Conqueror. Whilst preparing his troops for incursions into various parts of the country, a Spaniard, who with several others had been engaged in exploring the surrounding districts, reported his discovery of the kingdom of Mechoacan, which bounded the dominions of Mexico on the west, where he had been received with great hospitality. Its inhabitants were renowned in Anahuac for their skill and vigor in the use of the bow; and inured to arms had, though overshadowed by the Mexican power, preserved their independence. Their territory extended over a space of three hundred leagues; the capital city was founded on the eastern shore of the beautiful lake Pazcuaro. Though not remarkable at the time of the conquest for its mineral wealth, some of the richest mines have since been discovered within its bosom. The reigning monarch, Culcucin, had the reputation of a wise, liberal, and powerful prince. Cortes, immediately, despatched an embassy composed of a certain Captain Montano and three other Spaniards, with some twenty distinguished Mexicans, to his Court. They were met on the way by a large and splendid deputation from the king, which, in his name, politely congratulated the Castilians on their marvellous victories; but when they arrived at Court, the monarch received them with a frigid aspect and gravely demanded, what cause had led them to his dominions. Under the influence of the barbarous superstition which oppressed this whole country, he was strongly tempted to sacrifice the

strangers as victims more than ordinarily acceptable to his gods; but the prudence of his counsellors prevailed, and he dismissed the ambassadors, not only in safety, but with many marks of honour and valuable presents. With them he also sent several of his most distinguished nobles, whom he empowered to declare himself and his subjects vassals of the Spanish crown, and to promise that he would speedily confirm this submission in person. The gold which he sent to Cortes on this occasion, beside the curious gems and rich manufactures of feathers and cotton, was valued at one hundred thousand pesos. His messengers, astonished at the majesty of Cortes, the power of the Spanish army, and the monuments of its prowess, and charmed by the attentions they received, reported so favorably of their mission, that the king was seized with the most ardent curiosity to behold the wonders they described. Whilst preparations were being made for his own journey, he sent his brother, who was distinguished for courage and conduct, to Mexico, with additional presents and further protestations of submission. Afterwards, attended by a magnificent train, scarce inferior to that which had waited on Montezuma, he himself, with offerings still more valuable than those he had already sent, did homage to the Spanish General for his dominions. Whilst his nobles appeared on every occasion in the richest habiliments and adorned with jewels; the prince, in token of his respect for Cortes, presented himself in the coarsest apparel, and with every mark of humility usual in the meanest of his subjects. Yet, in his intercourse with the General one circumstance showed the high sense he entertained of his own dignity. Montezuma, haughty as he was, did not hesitate to address himself directly to the interpreter in his conversation with Cortes. But, the king of Mechoacan, always spoke to the

commander-in-chief of his army, who communicated his words to an officer of minor rank, and he to one still lower, until through many mouths, they reached the interpreter, who explained them to Cortes. Soon after the king had returned to his own country, he was followed by Olid with forty horsemen and one hundred infantry, for the purpose of taking possession of his kingdom. This officer was very courteously received and established the first colony at Tzinzunztan the capital of the kingdom.*

VIII. Cortes in common with all the chief adventurers to America at this period, believed in the proximity of the East Indies to the western shores of this continent; and his active mind, ignorant of the successful enterprise of Magellan, began already to form schemes for this important discovery. Even during his first visit to Mexico he had sent some of his soldiers to explore the country on the South Sea, who, when he had been driven from the city, became victims to the barbarity of the inhabitants of the provinces. As Mechoacan was separated from the southern ocean, only by the narrow district of Colima, the General directed Olid to reduce the latter and obtain a knowledge of the coast. In this attempt he was assisted by the Mechoacanese, but could not overcome the courageous resistance of the inhabitants without the aid of Sandoval, at the head of an additional Spanish force. Their joint efforts were successful after a horrible slaughter of the natives. Some Spanish colonists were established in the province of Colima, among whom ample portions of the country were distributed. But the favorite object of Cortes was more especially promoted by the subjection of the maritime provinces of Zacatala and Tecoantepet. The

* Bernal Diaz, Herrera.

chief of the latter had invoked the aid of the Spaniards against his neighbour, who voluntarily submitted to Alvarado the commander of the party. The Tecoantepese also became the subject of those whom he had inconsiderately invited.

IX. Whilst these acquisitions were being made in the west, Sandoval,* with two hundred infantry, thirty-six horse, and some thousand Mexicans under their chief nobles, made an excursion towards the south-east, through the district of Tochtepec and province of Coazahualco, and the country extending from Vera Cruz to Teochiapan and Tzapoteca. The objects of this march were the punishment of the Tochepes and other tribes, who had destroyed some small parties of Spaniards, sent to explore the country on Cortes' first visit to the capital—to search for mines—reduce the inhabitants fully under the Spanish dominion—levy contributions of gold—to reward the veteran soldiers by allotments of extensive portions of territory—all of which with much prudence and ability Sandoval satisfactorily effected. He founded the town Del Espiritu Santo, upon the river Guacacualco, at the distance of three leagues from the sea. About the same period, Alvarado subjected the province of Mixteca and part of Tzapoteca, in which lie some of the most beautiful portions of New Spain; particularly the valley of Huaxyacac, called by the Spaniards Oaxaca, or Guaxaca. He was forty days on his march from Mexico to Tutepeque, and in many places met with considerable resistance from the inhabitants. He obtained here, a very large quantity of gold, but escaped narrowly with his life, from a conspiracy among his Spanish troops, which originated in his own avarice. He established in a very unhealthy and inconvenient position a colo-

* November, 1521.

ny to which he gave the name of Segura de la Frontera.

X. Soon after his return to Mexico, these provinces attempted to throw off the yoke, and he again overran them; and marching through the districts of Zapotecas, Techoantepec, and Soconusco he entered that of Guatemala. As in almost every other part of the country, the inhabitants bravely resisted, but were compelled to submission. At a town called Utatlan, in a difficult country surrounded with defiles, an Indian chief, with a policy justified in the wars of civilized nations, attempted to deceive the invader by propositions of peace, whilst he prepared an ambuscade for him in the town. The artifice was discovered, and the chief, made prisoner, was condemned to be burned to death. Father Olmedo, whose zeal, though ardent, was tempered with discretion, obtained a respite of the sentence and permission to use his endeavours to convert him to the faith. He preached to the prisoner, in what language we are not told, one entire day, and felt himself rewarded by the conviction that he had gained a soul for heaven. In humble imitation of the mercy of the founder of our faith, the Father procured a commutation of the sentence, and the chief was not burned, but merely hanged to death. His victories prepared for Alvarado a pacific reception in the town of Guatemala. And aided by the forces of this province he carried his arms further to the south and east, warring with many tribes, and perpetrating innumerable butcheries to which the severity of his disposition incited him.

XI. We have incidently noticed the attempt of Francisco de Garay to establish a colony at Panuco. But, this enterprise merits more particular attention, for the contrast it affords with that of Cortes, and the relief it gives to that genius, to which alone, should be ascribed the conquest of Mexico.

De Garay, among other aspiring adventurers, had been highly excited by the voyages of Cordova and Grijalva; and having already acquired much wealth and consideration as Governor of Jamaica, he resolved to make a strenuous effort to increase both, in the newly discovered countries of the continent. Through the influence of the Bishop of Burgos he obtained the commission of Adelantado of the regions he should discover and colonize north of the river Panuco. He soon afterwards despatched a squadron of three vessels, with two hundred and forty soldiers, who were defeated by the natives. One ship, only, escaped, which with two others, subsequently sent, fell, as we have seen, into the power of Cortes' officers at Villa Rica. Yet, stimulated by the success of that General and disregarding his own losses, which he charged to the incapacity and treachery of his agents, he fitted out a fleet of thirteen ships in which he embarked one hundred and thirty-six cavalry, and eight hundred and forty foot soldiers, mostly musqueteers and cross-bowmen. This for the period, and the means the Spaniards possessed in America, was a very extensive armament, which under able commanders might have produced the most important and beneficial results.

Cortes, having received intelligence of Garay's designs, resolved to anticipate them by sending a party to reduce the country of Panuco under his authority. But, the inhabitants, numerous and warlike, resisting his lieutenant with much energy and success, and his most experienced captains being absent on other expeditions, he found it necessary to take this enterprise upon himself. His forces had now received very considerable additions, as well by those who had accompanied Tapia as by many arrivals from the islands. Leaving an efficient garrison in Mexico, under Diego de Soto,

he set out with one hundred and thirty horse, two hundred and fifty infantry, and ten thousand Mexicans. In no part of Anahuac had he found such resolute opposition. The enemy mustered seventy thousand warriors, and though repeatedly defeated, still fought with desperation, but finally submitted, upon the exhortations of the good Father Olmedo. From Panuco, the General marched with a portion of his troops to reduce the Indians beyond the river Chila. He crossed the stream in the night and after a severe struggle on the bank, against a large force, possessed himself of a town, plentifully stocked with provisions, among which were many jars of the wine of the country, carefully stored in cellars. In the temples he found the remains of the bodies and clothes of several of his countrymen, whose features were recognized by his soldiers. In a subsequent battle, the enemy not only fought with great spirit and pertinacity; but contrary to the custom of the Indians, rallied no less than three times to the charge. Unable to contend against the incessant activity of the General, who pursued them during the darkness of the night and the heavy rains of the season, they too were compelled to submission. Cortes founded a town here of one hundred and thirty houses, where he settled among others, sixty-three of his soldiers. He gave to it the name of St. Stephen del Puerto, allotting to it all the neighbouring districts he had conquered.

The fleet of Garay under his command sailed from Jamaica on St. John's day, one thousand five hundred and twenty-three. Touching at Xagua, in the island of Cuba, he received information of the proceedings of Cortes. The fate of Narvaez filled him with apprehensions for his own, should he obtrude upon the jurisdiction claimed by the former; but he became reassured on the promise of the licenciate Zuazo to mediate between himself and the General.

Upon approaching the coast of Mexico, adverse winds drove his fleet into the river Las Palmas, where he disembarked his troops and marched them for Panuco. Knowing that Cortes had a post on the former river he endeavoured to preserve his officers and troops against seduction, by exacting an oath of fidelity to himself. After a march of several days through a swampy and uninhabited country, he reached Panuco, where his weary and impatient troops anticipated refreshment and repose. But the incursions of Cortes had wasted the country, and the terrified inhabitants, concealed from this new flight of devourers whatever the rapacity of the first had left. Instead of well stocked granaries, his soldiers found bare walls, which afforded no defence against the reptiles and vermin that assailed them in every corner. He could obtain no tidings of his fleet which he had ordered to meet him, and his soldiers disgusted with the country and seduced by the favorable reports relating to Mexico, began to disband themselves; and on their way to that city, pillaged and otherwise maltreated the natives.

In these untoward circumstances, De Garay drew towards the colony of St. Stephen's, whose commandant, Vallejo, made prisoners of a part of his troops; and afterwards, by stratagem, obtained possession of his ships, which had continued in the river. In the mean time, Cortes apprized of his arrival, despatched Father Olmedo, Alvarado, and Sandoval, with instructions to exhibit the emperor's order, by which he was appointed Governor General of all his conquests; and to enforce obedience, if necessary, by arms. But De Garay was in no condition to resist. His followers, contemning his incapacity and ill fortune, generally deserted him; and he was reduced to the sad and mortifying necessity of casting himself upon the mercy of Cortes. The Conqueror not only received him at Mexico with

great humanity, but consented to give one of his daughters to De Garay's son then with the fleet, and promised to restore to him his ships and his fugitive soldiers. But he did not live to profit by these kind offers. A violent pleurisy carried him off in four days, and Cortes was subsequently, and calumniously charged, with having produced his death by poison. This event dissolved what remained of his armament. His soldiers dispersed themselves in small parties over the country, indulging in every species of rapine and aggression upon the Indians, who, at length flew to arms, and in a few days sacrificed and ate more than five hundred of the marauders. Encouraged by this success they, also, attacked the settlement of St. Stephen; and though they failed to obtain possession of the works, they killed the commandant, and more than forty of his party.*

XII. Cortes, immediately on the receipt of this distressing intelligence, despatched Sandoval, at the head of two hundred Spaniards and eight thousand Mexicans, to quell the insurrection. This officer, alike enterprising, brave and prudent, and possessing more of the admirable qualities of his General than any of the subordinate captains, succeeded in executing his instructions, after a prolonged and bloody contest; but he dishonoured his victory by an act, whose barbarity is not surpassed in the annals of civilized nations. Sixty caciques and four hundred nobles were burned at one time. And to render the scene still more horrible, the children and relatives of the wretched victims were assembled and compelled to be spectators of their dying agonies. This unparalleled act of inhumanity has not the apology of sudden rage excited by the heat

* B. Diaz. Herrera.

of battle, but was perpetrated after a solemn consultation with the Captain General.

XIII. Cortes having received information that the countries of Higuera and Honduras abounded with mines so rich, that the fishermen used golden and copper weights to their nets, and that a streight might be probably found there which united the two oceans, was moved by this double attraction to despatch an expedition thither under de Olid. The route by land to these remote provinces being tedious and difficult, a voyage by sea was determined on. Six ships were provided, on board of which embarked three hundred and seventy Spaniards, of whom one hundred were musqueteers and cross-bowmen, and twenty-two cavalry. Among these were five only, of the veteran conquerors, the companions of Cortes. They very reluctantly abandoned their state of repose, but could not resist the instances of their General. De Olid being instructed to touch at the Havanna for recruits and munitions, Velasques, whose desire of vengeance had never slept, availed himself of this opportunity to retort on Cortes the evils he had inflicted; and he prevailed on De Olid to renounce the jurisdiction of the latter, and to prosecute the adventure on his own account, under the protection of the Governor of Cuba. The armament arrived on the coast of Honduras early in May,* where De Olid established a colony, to which he gave the name of El Triunpho de la Cruz, and soon after openly declared his independence.[†]

XIV. In order fully to comprehend the events connected with this expedition it is necessary to trace succinctly, the prior northward enterprises of the Spanish adventurers, on the coast of Panama. Soon after the death of Bas-

* 1523.

† B. Diaz. Herrera.

co Nunez, the pilot Andreas de Niño, engaged with the king to undertake the discovery of the Spice Islands by the west, and to make a full examination of the western coast of the continent; the expenses and profits of the expedition to be equally shared between himself and the crown. The king, having reserved the nomination of the Captain General of the armament, selected Gil Gonzales D'Avila, accountant of Hispaniola, who was extensively engaged in commerce in that island. Failing to obtain from Pedrarias, the vessels constructed by Balboa, they built others at an almost incredible expenditure of men, money, and time.* After three years of incessant toil and suffering, Gonzales sailed from the Gulph of San Michael, on the 21st of January, 1522. Following the western coast, he landed from time to time, and acquired, with uncommon success, the good will of the natives; and the pious men who accompanied him, happily, by gentle arguments, converted many to their faith, who, in testimony of their sincerity, surrendered up the statues of their gods, cast in massive gold.

XV. Whilst in the territories of the Cacique Nicoya, from whom a province has been named, Gonzales was informed, that a powerful chieftain, called Nicaragua, resided at some fifty leagues distant, upon the lake which bears his name. An embassy was immediately sent to this prince, to communicate to him, that, the sender was a friend, who would work him no evil, provided he would embrace the faith of Jesus Christ, and acknowledge himself the subject of the king of Spain, the monarch of the world; but, who, on any other terms, would instantly declare war against him. The chieftain, who had already heard of the Spanish

* See Vol. ii. p. 109.

power, and the wonders which it had wrought, replied, that he earnestly desired peace, and would embrace the faith if he found it good. Gonzales advanced to his residence, and the priests who accompanied him, having instructed the Indian, that, his religion forbade drunkenness, gluttony, the sacrifice of men, and feeding on human flesh, he readily admitted its merit, and himself, his court, and nine thousand of his subjects were baptized. To two requisitions only, the chief objected. He would not renounce the pomp of war, nor the pleasures of his drunken dances; saying, that in the first case, the women would assume arms, and compel the men to spin, to weave, and to dig; which were the employments of females and slaves; and that the second was an amusement which injured no one. In the course of his conversion, this half naked child of nature, asked many questions which astonished his instructors, who had no conception that such subjects employed the mind of any Indian. He demanded, whether the christians had any knowledge of the great flood which had submerged the earth, and of any other deluge; whether the earth had then been turned upside down, or the heavens had fallen; when and how the sun, the moon, and the stars had lost their light and wandered from their course; who gave them motion and by what means they were upheld? He demanded the cause of the darkness of the night and of the frost; and why they superseded light and heat, since the latter were more pleasant and useful; what honour should be paid to the God of the christians, whom the birds that soared in the sky, the fishes that cut the liquid deep, the men who governed the earth, and all nature adored? Whence the soul had its being, and as it was immortal, why it remained in the body for so short a period? Whether the Holy Father at Rome, the

Vicar of Christ the God of the christians, died; whether the king of Castile, of whom he heard so much, was mortal, and why so few men required so large a quantity of gold? The reflection that prompted these inquiries, characterised a mind which under like culture would have equalled the supercilious European, who was eager to place the man of America in the rank of brutes.

XVI. The favorable reception of Gonzales, who had learned much of the progress of his countrymen in New Spain, inspired him with hopes of reaching the provinces which had submitted to Cortes. He journeyed northward over a fertile country thickly inhabited by tribes who gladly exchanged many valuable articles of gold for Spanish toys; but encountering others who were hostile and with whom he had several sharp engagements, he abandoned his intention of further discovery and returned to the coast, at the Gulph of St. Vincent, where his pilot Andres Niño awaited him. During the absence of his commander, Niño had surveyed the shore to the north-west, for more than three hundred and fifty leagues, and had reached seventeen and a half degrees of northern latitude. In this excursion Gonzales, had penetrated the country in various directions, the distance of two hundred and twenty leagues, had baptized thirty-two thousand two hundred and seventy souls, and carried off one hundred and twelve thousand five hundred pesos worth of gold. He had coasted the shore from Cape Blanco to Chorotega, had examined the Gulphs of Papagayos, Nicaragua, and Possession and the Bay of Fonseca, to which he gave name; in all which, he sought with great care a communication between the two seas. This was one of the most successful expeditions undertaken in the New World, and was attended with the least outrage to humanity.

XVII. Upon his return to Panama, Gonzales proceeded to St. Domingo, to fit out a squadron to make further discoveries and to establish a colony in Nicaragua. From this city he addressed a memorial to the king containing an ample account of his late voyage, and praying that the government of the country with such other lands as he should discover might be granted to him. Having provided a sufficient force, he sailed for Ybueras, a port on the Atlantic coast, with the intention of seeking a streight between the two seas. He hastened his enterprise, knowing that Pedrarias, the Governor of Panama, who claimed the right of prior discovery, was preparing to take possession of the provinces he had visited, and to deprive him of the reward of his labours.

XVIII. Pedrarias had fitted out an armament at Panama, for this purpose, which he designed to put under the command of Juan de Basurto; but growing impatient of the delays of that officer, he committed it to Francisco Hernandez de Cordova, with whom, sailed the Captains, Gabrial de Rojas, Sosa, Adreas de Garabito and Soto. Hernandez founded the town of Brusselas, in the Gulph of San Lucar, and another called Granada, upon the lake of Nicaragua, in the province of Neuquecheri. He carried a vessel, in pieces, over land, with which he made the full circuit of the lake, and discovered St. Juan river, by which it pours its waters into the Atlantic Ocean. His passage through this outlet was stopped by rapids and precipitous falls, but a party, sent along its banks, reported, that, for the distance of eighty leagues, they had found a rich and populous country, remarkable for the quantity, variety, and size of its timber.

XIX. In the mean time, Gonzales, to avoid opposition from Pedrarias, had penetrated the province of Honduras from the Atlantic. Leaving a

small portion of his force at a station to which he gave the name of San Gil de Buenavista, he proceeded to Cape Camaron, and thence to the valley of St. Jago de Ulancho, where he received information of the movements of Hernandez, who was then in its vicinity. In a few days he fell in with De Soto, with whom he had several engagements, and took from him one hundred and thirty thousand pesos of inferior gold which he had collected from the natives. From mutual dread Hernandez and Gonzales avoided each other. The former recalled his advance parties and erected for his defence some fortifications at the town of Leon, which he founded between the shores of the lake and the western coast; the latter retired to the port of Cavallos, on the eastern shore, near which he learned that some other Spaniards had established themselves. These consisted of the party under De Olid, at Triunpho de la Cruz, about fourteen leagues south of Cavallos. Thus, the Spanish adventurers had approached each other from opposite points; from the lakes of Mexico, and the Isthmus of Darien.

XX. Soon after these events, Hernandez, seduced by that spirit of independence which we have frequently had occasion to remark, renounced the authority of Pedrarias, and sought nominally the protection of the Geronymite Friars at St. Domingo, under pretence that the government of Nicaragua pertained immediately to the crown by virtue of the discovery of Gil Gonzales, and not to the Governor of Darien. To sustain this position he sought the protection of Cortes, then about to depart from Truxillo for Mexico; but, he, now devoted to order and subordination, advised Hernandez to preserve his faith to Pedrarias. But this advice was unwelcome to one, who, having acquired a very considerable stock of gold, desired also to possess ex-

tended and irresponsible power; and though several of his officers deserted him, he persisted in his disobedience. Pedrarias justly irritated at this rebellion but more alarmed at the presence and progress of Cortes in provinces over which he claimed jurisdiction, marched for Nicaragua, and apprehending Hernandez in the town of Leon, put him to death.*

XXI. Few circumstances connected with the enterprise of Cortes in the New World had given him more pain than the defection of De Olid. The qualities of the Captain had endeared him much to the General, who had relied upon his faith, his zeal, and ability, with the utmost confidence. He did not delay however, to fit out an armament against him, consisting of two ships and one hundred and fifty soldiers under the command of his brother-in-law, Francisco de las Casas. A naval engagement was fought between this force and that of De Olid, in the bay of Triunpho, in which the latter, having lost one of his vessels, made overtures for peace; designing to protract the negotiation until a part of his troops engaged in exploring the country should return. But, during the treaty the ships of Las Casas were wrecked by a violent storm, in which forty men perished. The rest, driven ashore naked and distressed, gave De Olid a bloodless victory. The captured troops cheerfully joined the standard of the victor; and their commander and his officers were entertained in his dwelling and suffered to continue at large upon their parole. Whilst these events passed at Triunpho, Briones the lieutenant of Olid, had encountered and taken prisoners above seventy of the troops of Gonzales, whom he soon after liberated much to the dissatisfaction of his Captain. Gonzales, himself, unable

* 1526.

to contend with De Olid, retreated to St. Gil de Buenavista, where he hanged Francisco Riquelme, the Governor and a clergyman, who had been guilty of sedition and other offences; and thence he passed to Choloma, where he fell into the hands of Juan Ruano, one of Olid's Captains, and his people were incorporated with Olid's forces. But the liberty which the last gave his prisoners, Las Casas and Gonzales, enabled them to conspire his ruin. They attempted to assassinate him, but he escaped from their hands and fled into the forest; being soon after apprehended, he was formally tried by a court which they established, and beheaded as a traitor, pursuant to its sentence. The two commanders, thus restored to freedom, united their forces; and having made several settlements in the country, set out for Mexico to put themselves under the protection of Cortes, and to solicit aid from him to confirm their enterprises.

XXII. The Governor General, soon after the departure of Las Casas, had sent him assistance in a vessel commanded by Pedro Gonzales de Truxillo; who having sailed as far south as the port of Cavallos, and meeting with tempestuous weather, returned to Panuco, and asserted that Las Casas had perished by the storm. But Cortes, receiving certain intelligence of his capture by Olid, resolved to march in person, over land, to Honduras. He considered the revolt of this officer of the most dangerous tendency; that if not punished it would serve as an example to his other lieutenants, each of whom, according to the practice of the age, might be disposed to carve out a kingdom for himself, which should be dependent only on the Spanish crown. But the punishment of Olid was not the only inducement to this extraordinary march of three thousand miles. He was desirous of inspecting the whole extent of country, over which he pro-

bably expected to reign during life; to investigate its capability for commerce, its productions, and more particularly, its mines.

XXIII. When the Emperor advanced Cortes to the government of New Spain, he, at the same time appointed certain commissioners to receive and administer the royal revenue there, with independent jurisdiction. These officers, who arrived about this time,* consisted of Alonzo de Estrada, treasurer; Rodrigo de Albornoz, *contador*, or accountant; Gonzalo de Salazar, factor; and Peralmendez Chirinos, inspector. Selected from inferior stations in the public offices of Madrid, they took great state upon them in Mexico; but official habits had so contracted their understandings that they were incompetent to judge of matters beyond the verge of their bureaus; and they consequently, not only gave Cortes much immediate trouble in his administration, but misrepresented his conduct and views in their correspondence with the royal ministers. They were received by Cortes with great respect and honour. At his departure for Honduras, he committed the government of Mexico, to Estrada and Albornoz, and took Salazar and Chirinos with him, as far as Guacacuálco, whence he unfortunately despatched them, to exercise with the others, joint authority in the government. Their divisions subsequently produced much scandal, and greatly retarded the public business.

XXIV. The preparations which the Conqueror made for his journey were no longer those of the simple soldier; but such as might well become an eastern Satrap or the Viceroy of an extensive, rich, and enslaved empire. Quauhtimotzin, Coanacotzin, and Tetepanquetzatl, the vanquished monarchs of the Vale of Mexico, with several of their most pow-

erful nobles, formed a striking feature of the pageant, and assured him of the obedience of their late subjects. Three thousand Mexicans attended their chiefs, beside the usual domestics. Cortes' personal attendants consisted of a steward and paymaster, a keeper of the plate, of which there were large services in gold and silver, a major domo, two stewards of the household, a butler, a confectioner, a chambermaid, a physician and surgeon, a number of pages, two armour bearers, eight grooms, two falconers, five musicians, a stage dancer, a juggler and puppet player, a master of the horse and three muleteers.* His Spanish force was composed of one hundred and fifty horse, and as many foot, whose number were nearly doubled during the march, by the addition of the veteran troops who had settled upon their *encomiendas* in Guacacualco. Orders were given to despatch from Vera Cruz, in appropriate vessels, an abundant supply of provisions and warlike stores, to follow the army along the coast, from which the General did not design far to deviate. A large herd of swine followed for the supply of the tables of the General and his officers. These preparations indicate expectation of an easy and pleasant excursion, which was converted into one of unexampled toil and privation.

XXV. Before his departure,† Cortes addressed, to the emperor, thanks for his appointment, with an account of his administration, and a present of eighty thousand crowns in gold, and a culverin of the same metal, valued at twenty-four thousand pesos. This extraordinary piece of artillery, was named the Phœnix, and bore a motto, complimen-

* The reader will observe that the arrangement of this list is by B. Diaz.

† October, 1524.

tary to the king, and expository of the merits of the donor.*

XXVI. It would be fruitless to follow Cortes throughout the whole of this astonishing expedition, which employed him for nearly two years and a half; in which he scaled mountains never crossed by human foot, traversed profound and rapid rivers, sometimes on rafts, at other times on bridges, which endured afterwards for many years; passed over deserts of burning sand and through forests which had never before been penetrated; sustaining hunger and thirst and every species of privation, combating with ferocious nations, who had grown confident in arms, from the Spanish dissensions; and suffering fatigue which could be equalled only by the constancy with which it was borne. In his progress he founded several colonies, particularly, one in the country of Pontonchan, and another in the bay of St. Andrews; and extended his dominion over all the nations, through which he passed as a tremendous meteor, whose course was followed by torrents of blood.

XXVII. No act of Cortes' life has been more severely censured, than the execution of the Mexican princes, during his march to Honduras. But, if credit be given to the Spanish historians, their death was exacted by every principle upon which men in the situation of the Spanish leaders could reason. These unfortunate potentates, beholding the state of misery to which this long and painful journey had reduced the Spanish force, contrasting its numerical strength with that of their

* Esta Ave nacio sin par: Yo en servir os sin segundo;
Y vos sin igual in El Mundo.

Which may be literally rendered:

This bird is born without a peer; In your service I am
unrivalled;
And you have no equal in the world.

own countrymen and considering the facility of arming the nations around them who spoke the language and practised the religion of the Mexicans, conspired to destroy Cortes and his companions and to march back to Mexico; filling the country with the cry of freedom, and gathering all its tribes in one mass, to be rolled upon the capital and to crush at once the power of the oppressors. The plan, worthy of Quauhtimotzin, glorious in its projection and practicable of execution, might have been successful, if not marred by a sordid slave, who held the confidence of his master. The conspirators were arrested and tried before a Spanish tribunal. The principal Mexican officers confessed the plot, and Quauhtimotzin, Coanacotzin, and Tetepanquetzatl were hanged, as common malefactors,* in the district of Izancana. They met their deaths with heroic constancy; but though they did not deny the conception of the plot, they protested, that no means had been taken to carry it into effect. Their countrymen were stupefied at their fate which they scarce deemed possible, and even the Spaniards condemned it as a cruel, if not an unjust deed. The piety of the historians has recorded, that, they died humble and devout christians!! The surrounding nations were struck with awe at this signal punishment, and more readily submitted themselves to the Spanish power. The remorse of Cortes is said to have driven sleep from his couch for the space of three nights; but we have no reason to believe, that his conscience was more sensitive than that of other heroes; and the anxiety of a General, who, contending with a thousand difficulties, had detected a dangerous conspiracy in his camp, may readily account for unusual and prolonged vigils.

* March, 1525.

XXVIII. Having at length arrived in Honduras among the settlements established by De Olid and Gil Gonzales, Cortes learned the death of his rebellious officer and the departure of his judges and executioners. He found also, that a spirit of sedition had in a great measure marred the designs of the founders of the colonies. He communicated, however, a portion of his own energy to the half famished and despairing residents, and not only confirmed them in their several stations at Nato, Naco, Puerto de Cavallos, Truxillo, and other places but, established some new posts, particularly La Navidad, and overrun the country in every direction, being successful on all occasions in reducing the natives to obedience.

XXIX. At Truxillo, he received tidings, by a vessel from Mexico, which gave him much pain. He was informed, that it was universally reported and believed there, that he and his whole army had perished; that his credit had been much impaired at the Court of Spain by the calumnies of the royal officers at Mexico; that the government of Panuco had been given to Nuno de Gusman, and that New Spain was torn by dissensions among the officers he had appointed. Salazar and Chirinos, immediately upon their return to Mexico formed a strong party, among whom was the licentiate Zuazo, Rodrigo Paz, and other friends of Cortes, to strip Estrada and Albornez of their power. But, after a considerable struggle and some bloodshed, the latter were victors, and got possession of the persons of the two former deputies and some of their friends. But this did not annihilate the strife, which encouraged many of the Indian tribes to rebel. Upon the report of Cortes' death, which had been proclaimed by his friend De Ordaz, who, when seeking him along the coast had notice of the destruction of a Spanish party, whom he believed

to be that of Cortes, the factor Salazar proclaimed himself Captain General and Governor of New Spain; and to maintain his power oppressed the natives and conducted himself in the most tyrannical manner with the friends of Cortes, and that the death of the General and his party might be deemed certain, issued an order commanding the wives of the soldiers who had gone with Cortes, to consider their husbands as dead in law, and immediately to marry again. He publicly ordered a matron who refused to credit the death of her husband in any combat with the Indians, and who, Penelope like, patiently awaited the return of her lord, to be publicly whipped.

Whilst these tumults were at their height, Las Casas and Gonzales arrived at Mexico, and publicly asserted the existence of Cortes, of whom they had intelligence in their route. They took part against Salazar, declaring that if Cortes were dead his proper successor would be Alvarado; and that officer was induced by their instances to quit his district for New Spain; but becoming fearful of assassination he soon returned to it. The usurper then seized on Las Casas and Gonzales, and prosecuted them for the murder of De Olid, for which they were sentenced to death, and were with difficulty saved, by an appeal to the Emperor. He transported Zuazo to the island of Cuba, and actually tortured and hanged De Paz, the private treasurer of Cortes, who refused to surrender the deposits put by his master in his charge.

XXX. Cortes resolved to return to Mexico by the vessel that brought him these unwelcome tidings; but having been twice compelled to disembark, by adverse winds and injuries to his ship, he was seized with the superstitious belief that God had destined him to remain to complete the colonization of this country. He recalled his troops,

whom, under the command of Sandoval, he had directed to return to Mexico, by way of Nicaragua and Guatemala. But, the patience of his followers, at length, seemed to have been overcome by the hardships they had suffered, and the opinion that began to prevail among them, that the good fortune of their leader had deserted him. This faith in destiny seems inseparable from a life of vicissitude, in which events have a course independent of the volition of the actors in them. A train of favorable results, often produced by causes which they do not understand, seems the work of their good genius, who seconds their aims by inscrutable means; whilst misfortunes which might often be traced to ignorance, imprudence, or incompetency, are ascribed to the departure of the good and the advent of an evil spirit. Soldiers and seamen are the peculiar subjects of this superstition, and the powerful minds which guided a Cæsar and Napoleon, have proven too weak to resist it. The mind of Cortes had been, in truth, broken by his labours; disease had wasted his health, and whilst he himself shrank unconsciously from new labours his soldiers lost their confidence in his power to command success. The hardy veterans who had, at his bidding, abandoned the easy homes which had rewarded their early labours, now refused him obedience, and the utmost that Sandoval could obtain from them, was to delay their march for a season, whilst he endeavoured to arouse his General to a resolution more worthy of his fame. But, an invincible dread of proceeding to Mexico had seized his mind. At the earnest persuasion of Sandoval he despatched Martin de Orantes a confidential servant, with a commission to Alvarado and Las Casas, to take upon them the government during his absence; and in case they should not be in Mexico, he confirmed the authority given at hi

departure to Estrada and Albornoz, revoking that of Salazar and Chirinos. Orantes was wafted by favorable gales to the Mexican coast, and by a rapid and secret journey attained the capital. He there found Alvarado and several friends of Cortes, concealed, to whom he communicated the glad tidings of his master's existence, and commands. Although he arrived at midnight, the name of Cortes was a spell to raise a host, and by the dawn of day the palace of Salazar was attacked, himself made prisoner, and confined, after the Mexican custom, in a cage of timber, where, Chirinos soon after became his companion. Cortes was informed as soon as possible of this revolution, and consented to return to Mexico, but insisted on going by land. The pilots, however, representing that the season was favorable* he embarked, and soon after by the way of the Havanna arrived at the capital. His arrival was hailed by all classes with the greatest joy. It allayed, though it could not extinguish the party feuds of the Spaniards; and such had been the wild rule of those who exercised the government in his absence, that the Indians even deemed him their deliverer, and marshalled his way with their rude music, and strewed his path with flowers. His presence restored a general but momentary peace throughout the whole country.

* April, 1526.

CHAPTER VII.

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I. During the long absence of Cortes from the capital of New Spain, his faithless deputies had ear-

nestly laboured for his destruction, not only by appropriating his conquests to themselves, but, also, by undermining his favor at the Spanish court, filling the mind of the emperor with doubts of his General's loyalty. Upon the first arrival of the royal officers in Mexico, they were alike astonished and offended, by the independent and irresponsible course of the conqueror; whose policy, dictated by a sound judgment, operating in new and untried scenes, rejected the trammels they would have forged for him by official forms. His magnificence displayed alike, in the improvement and ornament of his city, in the splendour of his Court, and in the gifts of provinces and kingdoms to his dependents, created envy and fear, in the minds of these officers, who, reasoning from their own irregular ambition, readily adopted the belief, that he designed to render himself, wholly independent of the royal authority. In their letters, therefore, they represented Cortes, as an ambitious tyrant, who, having usurped an illegal jurisdiction, aspired at independence, and who augmented his power, by the accumulation of exorbitant wealth and the erection of fortifications throughout the country; rendering the natives subservient to his designs, by marrying the daughters of their principal chiefs to the most devoted of his soldiers. These representations enforced by many of Cortes' most powerful enemies, now in Spain, and not less by his own silence, and the disorder in Mexico, caused by his expedition to Honduras, awakened the suspicions of the Spanish ministers, most of whom had been formed to business under the jealous and rigid administration of Ferdinand. Unmindful of Cortes' past services, and regardless of those he was rendering in his last extraordinary expedition, they infused their doubts into the mind of their master, and prevailed on him to issue an order to the admiral Don Diego Colum-

bus to assume the Government of New Spain, to raise an army at his own cost to proceed to Mexico, to arrest Cortes, and even to punish him with death should he be found guilty of the crimes of which he was accused. The admiral claimed the government of this whole country as a right consequent on the original compact of his father with the crown of Castile; but, though the opportunity of maintaining it was thus offered him, he either had not the means to prosecute it, or was unwilling to commit himself in a contest, with a leader so successful and renowned as Cortes. The delay of his preparations gave time to the friends and agents of the latter, among whom the Duke of Bejar was most conspicuous, to change the determination of his majesty, and to induce him to send to Mexico an officer of high rank to make a formal inquisition into the conduct of Cortes, and, if necessary, to seize his person and send him prisoner to Spain.

II. The Licentiate Ponce de Leon a near relative of the count Don Martin de Cordova, was selected for this important service: but though appointed in the early part of the year 1525, he did not arrive in Mexico until June of the following year. Cortes, informed of his landing at San Juan de Ulua, despatched a messenger with compliments and offers of service; requesting to be informed by which of the two roads, the judge would proceed to the capital, that he might give him the reception due to his station. In answer, De Leon declared his intention to remain at Medellin, for a short time, to recover from the fatigues of his voyage. This space was employed by the enemies of Cortes to pervert the mind of his judge, and to fill it with distrust of his courtesies; and they even presumed to charge him with the design of assassinating De Leon on the way. They represented, that, Cortes had resolved to put Salazar and Chirinos to death

and urged his instant departure, as the only means of averting their fate. Other messengers, despatched by Cortes, met the Licentiate at Iztapalapan, where a sumptuous banquet was prepared for him. With the concluding service, some cheesecakes and custards were served, as great delicacies, of which a part of the company ate with such excess, as to produce nausea, which they openly ascribed to poison administered by command of the General. Whilst here, some rich presents were offered by order of Cortes to the Licentiate, but historians do not concur in affirming his reception of them. On the road from Iztapalapan he was met by the Governor and his principal officers and escorted to a palace prepared for him in the capital.*

III. The extraordinary officer known in the Spanish polity by the name of *Juez de Residencia* was a commissioner of inquiry into the conduct of the governors of the colonies. His powers necessarily superseded those of the person he was sent to judge, that he might enforce his decrees. In the present case, two sets of instruction, the one public and the other private, had been given to De Leon. By the former he was required immediately on his arrival at Vera Cruz to despatch a messenger to Cortes, and the Royal officers at Mexico; to enter the country without ostentation or tumult, to proceed immediately to the capital, and, there, to commence the duties of his inquisition, that Cortes, as on a former case, might not have an opportunity or pretence of impeding his progress; to send to the King after the expiration of three months his report; to assume the ordinary powers of government, to advance with zeal the extension of the faith, and to promote the royal interests, with the peace and order of the country, paying due regard to the ad-

* Bernal Diaz. Herrera.

vice which the experience of Cortes had well prepared him to give: That on his arrival at Mexico he should cause the fortress of the City to be delivered up to Salazar, and provide him with sufficient force to maintain it, the king having nominated him, Alcade, and to place another officer, named in his instructions, in command of the naval force: To inquire into the official conduct of the royal officers, their exorbitant salaries, and the causes which had led to the mutual recriminations, they had preferred: To ascertain the correctness of the reports relative to the gold and silver mines of Mechoacan, and apply measures to render them productive: That with the Governor and experienced religious men, he should consider the condition of the Indians and report, on the propriety of their holding their possessions, either in their ancient state or as feudal vassals; but to make no innovations until his majesty should have determined thereon. His private instructions commanded him to inquire of the alledged irreligion and disloyalty of Cortes; of his efforts to sustain his power by courting the natives and seducing their allegiance, and by the collection of arms; of his assumption of the forms of royalty, and his obstinacy in resisting the royal commands, or perversely construing them to his own purposes; of his vast appropriation of gold, lands and vassals to his own use; melting secretly large masses of the first, without paying the customary duty to the King; taking one fifth of the precious metal received, beside that reserved for the emperor, for his own use as Captain General; devising pretences to arrest the embarkation of the royal treasures; retaining illegally four millions which he had acquired by ravaging the country, beside the immense sums paid in tribute by forty provinces, one alone of which, yielded fifty thousand pesos per diem independent of what he drew from the mines; burying

the great treasures of Montezuma, and sending large quantities to the Southern ocean, where he retained ships to transport him and his wealth, to some other region, under pretence of making new discoveries: Of his having drawn seventy thousand castellanos from the city of Tezcuco, and eighty thousand from another province, and of taking to himself all the profits of the estates that had been set apart for his majesty:—Of the wide spread territory covered with a million and a half of vassals which he had also appropriated to himself, from which he derived two hundred millions of reals, none of which he divided with the crown: Of his exaction of seventy thousand castellanos from De Soto the royal treasurer, under pretence that it was required for the fleet, and of his making grants of land to his friends, discharged from the payment of the royal duty on gold. These exaggerated charges, which speak incredible things of the wealth of the country, exhibit the wild conceptions of the correspondents of the king, in Mexico, relative to the riches of New Spain; and display in disgusting colours, their malignity against the man on whose bounties they had richly fed. That their calumnies were partly credited, the mission and secret injunctions of De Leon bear witness; but though authorized, in case he found Cortes guilty of disloyalty, to expel him by force from the country, such power was not given in case of minor delinquencies. Charles and his ministers, perhaps did not consider it politic nor just, to hold him to a strict account for the sums he had appropriated to himself, whilst he ruled an empire which he had violently seized for his master. On the contrary, they commanded their inquisitor, should the general prove loyal, to confirm at the end of three months his titles of Adelantado, and Captain General, and apply himself to discover the source of the dissen-

sions among the royal officers, in relation to the Governor, and which among them was the culpable party.

De Leon also bore a royal letter to Cortes, in which the monarch observed, that, as he desired to know what advantage had accrued to him personally, by the reduction of the country under his dominion, and having had many complaints against the governor since his appointment, which, though, he believed them to be dictated by passion and envy, imposed on him the duty of instituting an inquiry (*tomar residencia*) in conformity to the laws and customs of the kingdom, he had commissioned the Licentiate Luis Ponce de Leon, a man of science and virtue, to perform this service; and required that the governor should receive him with respect, and give him such assistance in the performance of his office, as his great experience qualified him to bestow. In another missive, the king added, that, having been informed, the governor had taken for himself the principal Indian provinces and population, leaving for his master a very inconsiderable portion, he conceived, that, though his extraordinary services demanded a great reward, the one taken was excessive, and ought to be reformed; and therefore, he required, that, he should content himself with a more reasonable part, leaving the remainder for his majesty. This was indeed the Lion demanding the Lion's part of the product of a chase to which he had scarce been a party.

IV. Cortes received the commands of his sovereign with the greatest respect; and surrendered the insignia of the Governor's office with a good grace; retaining, however, his General's truncheon, by the special command of his majesty. The intercourse between himself and the licentiate was respectful if not cordial, and the latter paid a just homage to the dignity of the former, by observing, that, he

must have long practised the manners of a great man. De Leon commenced his official duties by proclaiming his readiness to hear all persons who were aggrieved by the former administration. A host of accusers, litigants and claimants were roused by this call. Among them appeared not a few of the veteran conquerors, who believed themselves inadequately rewarded by their commander; but, their improvidence, most probably, rendered unavailable all attempts to better their condition. Whatever hopes they may have entertained from the *residencia* were speedily overthrown by the death of De Leon. The vessel which brought him from Spain, was infected by a malignant disease, of which, more than an hundred of the passengers died. He was attacked by this distemper a few days after his arrival in the city, whilst giving public audience. But, notwithstanding the cause of his death was obvious, and publicly known, the enemies of Cortes charged him with having procured it by poison. Apprehensive of the event, the licentiate nominated Marcos de Aguilar, who had accompanied him from Spain, his lieutenant, charging him to suspend the prosecution of the *residencia*, until the pleasure of the king should be known.

V. This transfer of authority did not pass without question. Doubts were raised as to the right of De Leon to bequeath it; but, at length, the city council determined, that, the royal power could not die, and that the king's representative might perpetuate it. Overtures were made to Cortes, which he promptly rejected, for an association in the government with Aguilar. The latter, who was old and feeble, sunk under the burden he had assumed; and in a few months followed his predecessor to the grave, having named Estrada, the treasurer, his successor. The Council again solicited Cortes

to resume the government as he had formerly held it; but he, resolving to give no further occasion to the malice of his enemies, again declined it, and Sandoval was joined with the treasurer, chiefly with the view of holding in check by his military talents, the querulous temper of Nino de Gusman, whose violence in Panuco gave great uneasiness to the Spaniards of Mexico. The government was thus administered for several months, until Estrada, was informed by the accountant Albornez who had arrived in Spain, that the king approved of the disposition made by Aguilar, and was content that his authority should be thus exercised, until he should otherwise direct. Elevated by these tidings, he assumed a more lofty port, and resolved to govern alone, and cast off, with Sandoval, the influence of Cortes. To strengthen himself against the latter he formed an alliance with Salazar and Perelmendez whom he liberated from prison. Instigated by these factious men, he dared to cut off the hand of Christoval Cortejo, a servant of Cortes, who had wounded a partizan of his own in quarrel. This barbarous sentence, inflicted without the form of trial, was followed by an order of banishment, from New Spain. At the same time, dreading the vengeance of the General, he presumed to interdict his presence in the City. Even to this insult, the patience of Cortes submitted without murmur; but his spirit was sorely tried, by an order, soon after received from Spain, for the discharge of Salazar and Perelmendez, whose guilt in the seizure of his property and in the death of his steward Rodrigo de Paz, he deemed too evident, to escape punishment; though with exemplary moderation he had refrained from becoming the judge in his own cause.

VI. Whilst the conqueror of Mexico was thus driven from the city of his fondest care and the proud and enduring monument of his fame, by en-

emies whom he might have prostrated with a word, had he not dreaded to increase the royal jealousy, that, passion was inflamed, to the most violent resolutions. Albornez was the chief conduit through which the poisonous calumnies from Mexico were poured into the royal ear, and no crime was too base or horrific, to be charged upon the General. In addition to the offences before ascribed to him, he was now accused of having poisoned De Leon, Aguilar, and his own wife, who had come to him, some years before, from Cuba.

Of these atrocious deeds he was momentarily believed guilty; and the king commanded the *Audiencia*, or board for the government of Mexico which was now erected,* to behead him; and laid an embargo on all vessels about to sail for New Spain, lest he should receive intelligence of this design, and array his much dreaded power against it. But this hasty determination, rare in Spanish policy relative to America, was revoked, in consequence of more favourable and more just representations of the conduct and disposition of Cortes, made by his friends and servants, who arrived in Spain at this period. But all accounts from the new world, being filled with relations of the wealth of the conqueror, and of his influence over the Spanish and Indian population, continued to irritate the jealousy of the Spanish ministers, who directed the president of the supreme council of the Indies, to invite him in the most honorable terms to Spain, to receive from the king, the high rewards that he merited; whilst orders were given to the Audiencia, in case he delayed his departure, to send him as a prisoner.

VII. Cortes, whose mind was still bent on important schemes of discovery and conquest, was very reluctantly disposed to abandon the scenes of

* 1528.

his triumph. But the crisis was at hand; and the alternative was obedience or rebellion. To the latter he was urged by some of his rash followers, but his prudence and his loyalty, alike forbade a course so desperate. He resolved, therefore, to avoid the ignominy of a trial before prejudiced judges, and to repair to Castile to commit himself and his cause to the justice and generosity of his sovereign.

VIII. He arrived at Palos in Spain, in December, 1527, attended by his friend Sandoval and other principal captains; having in his train a son of Montezuma and another of Maxicatzin, with many of the principal nobles of Mexico, Tlascala, and other chief cities. His portable wealth, according to Herrera,* consisted of fifteen hundred marks of wrought plate, two hundred thousand pesos of fine gold,† ten thousand of inferior quality, many rich jewels, one of which, an emerald, was valued at forty thousand pesos, with vast quantities of the richest manufactures, valuable gums, and curious plants and animals. Among his Indian attendants were several *Albinos* remarkable for the whiteness of their skins and their defect of vision, some dwarfs of extraordinary deformity, and several of the most expert players at the Indian games. This retinue was such as became the conqueror of a mighty kingdom. But he had scarce landed, when he had the misfortune to lose his most valued officer Sandoval, who died after a lingering illness, at the house of a rope-maker at Palos.‡

* Dec. iv. lib. 3. 4.

† Equal to more than 1,000,000 of dollars of the present money.

‡ During the illness of this officer at Palos, he was robbed by his host of thirteen bars of gold. The rogue perceiving his weakness, despatched his servants on a pretended mission to Cortes, and then in the presence of their master broke open his chests, whilst he, unable to resist, made no outcry, lest the fellow should smother him with the bed-clothes. The robber made good his escape into Portugal. *B. Diaz.*

IX. The arrival of Cortes in Spain removed all apprehensions with respect to his designs. The emperor received him as one whom conscious innocence had brought into the presence of his master, and who was entitled by extraordinary services to the highest marks of distinction and respect. The order of St. Jago, the title of Marquis del Valle de Guaxaca, the grant of an ample territory in New Spain, of which that beautiful valley formed part, were successively bestowed upon him; and as his manners were correct and elegant, notwithstanding he had passed the greater part of his life among rough adventurers, the emperor admitted him to the same familiar intercourse with himself, that was enjoyed by noblemen of the first rank;* Upon his captains, as well those who remained in Mexico, as those who had accompanied him to Court, the monarch also showered his favours; and to the faithful Tlascallans he granted perpetual freedom from slavery, either by repartimiento, or as serfs attached to the soil.

X. But no effort of Cortes, though supported by many and influential friends, could prevail on the emperor to restore to him the government of New Spain. If this visit of the conqueror to Castile evinced his present fealty, it also gave an opportunity of observing his ability and popular qualities, and the king dreaded to entrust the power of that office to one, who was so competent to employ it against him. The safety resulting from a divided power among his servants was well understood by a prince so subtle as Charles; and the use of this expedient might be justified, where distance alone rendered the servant almost independent of his master. But no prudential reason forbade encouragement to Cortes to engage in new enterprizes, or the grant of means

* Herrera. Diaz. Robertson.

for rendering them successful. The monarch, therefore, bestowed upon him the office of Captain General of New Spain, and the government, with other advantages, of any country he might discover on the South Sea.

XI. In the mean time, the Audiencia at whose head was Nuno de Gusman had been established in Mexico. Armed with greater powers than had been given to any officer hitherto sent to New Spain, they at once superseded Estrada, and took upon themselves the government of the country. They prosecuted the inquiry against Cortes, with malignant severity; suffering his enemies to rail against him in the public court with the greatest indecency, condemning him on almost every charge, and directing his property to be sold by public auction for the payment of fines which they imposed on him. And they imprisoned Alvarado and others of his companions, who exclaimed against the injustice and irregularity of their proceedings. In their report to the King, they unanimously deprecated the return of Cortes to New Spain, as a measure destructive to the quiet and welfare of the country. At the instance of a relative of Narvaez, they put upon trial more than two hundred and fifty veterans for their attack upon that officer, and sentenced them to fine, and banishment from Mexico. This decree, being merely *pro forma*, was never enforced. Instead of conducting themselves with the grave decorum which should have distinguished them as judges, they entered into all the petty cabals of the country, and introduced the most serious disorders among the people. Contrary to the express command of the king, they changed the distribution which had been made of lands and slaves, appropriating to themselves and their creatures many valuable estates; and in short, gave so much general scandal and offence, that the clergy remonstrated against

their proceedings; and the king, on the recommendation of the supreme council of the Indies, determined to supersede them, by the appointment of another set of commissioners.

XII. Having spent more than two years in Castile, and concluded the marriage which had been long negotiated between himself and Donna Juanna de Aguilar, daughter of the Count of that name, and niece of the Duke of Bejar, Cortes embarked for New Spain, where he arrived, at Vera Cruz, on the 15th July, 1530. Indians and Spaniards thronged to welcome his return, and to pour forth their complaints against the Audiencia; offering their services to overthrow its power and punish its malignity. Notwithstanding Cortes prudently endeavoured to moderate their anger, and repress every demonstration of violence, the attention he received from all ranks, so alarmed the Auditors that they prohibited his entrance into the city of Mexico, and prepared to enforce the interdiction by arms. He advanced however to Tezcoco, where for some time he held a court, much better attended than that of the Audiencia in the capital. Soon after the arrival of the second Audiencia, he retired to one of his estates at Tecoantepetl, to prepare for his proposed discoveries in the South Sea, and never returned to the city of Mexico.

XIII. The new Audiencia, at whose head was Don Sebastian Ramirez, bishop of St. Domingo, was composed of men of probity, habituated to business, who applied themselves industriously to remedy the disorders occasioned by their predecessors; whom they condemned in many cases to make restitution to the injured; stripping them of their unjustly acquired possessions, and imprisoning their most violent and vicious agents. Nuno de Gusman avoided their jurisdiction, being engaged in an expedition against the Chechimecas.

XIV. We shall now follow the fortune of Cortes from his return to Mexico until his death. After which, we shall give a succinct view of the labours of his companions, and other adventurers, in discovering and reducing to obedience the several portions which formed the viceroyalty of New Spain. We have already mentioned, cursorily, the early desire of Cortes to explore the immense extent of the Southern Ocean. In 1522 he caused a survey to be made on the coast of Zacatula, to ascertain what means might be there provided for his purpose, and directed several vessels to be built. In 1527 by the command of the emperor, he despatched three ships from Zacatula to the Moluccas under Alvaro de Saavedra, who, upon his arrival there, fell into the hands of the Portuguese. In May 1532, he fitted out two ships from the port of Acapulco, which he entrusted to Diego Hurtado de Mendoza. Before they had proceeded far to sea, a mutiny arose among the troops, and the mutineers seized one of the vessels, with which they returned to New Spain, but were shipwrecked in the Bay of Banderas, and two persons only escaped from the hostility of the natives, to report the fate of the expedition. Hurtado continued his voyage, but he was never afterwards heard of. In October 1533, Cortes despatched two other vessels, of which Diego Bezerra and Hernando de Grijalva were respectively Captains, and Zimenes chief pilot. They were instructed to make search for Hurtado and to attempt the discovery of islands which were rich in pearls. The vessels were separated by a storm the first night after quitting port, and did not again join company: Grijalva availing himself of the opportunity to throw off the authority of Bezerra his chief, and to appropriate to himself, the merit of such discoveries as he might make; which consisted, however, only of an uninhabited island, called by him Santo Tome.

Bezerra and Ximenes quarrelled, and the latter assassinated the former, and would have slain others of the crew, but for the interference of two Franciscan Friars. Under his command, the vessel touched at a port on the western coast called Santa Cruz, where he put the friars and those they had saved from his fury on shore, and beheld them slaughtered by the savage inhabitants. Soon after, he and twenty-two of his confederates, having on some occasion ventured on shore, were also slain by the natives, and the vessel falling with an enfeebled crew within the jurisdiction of Nuno de Gusman, this violent and unprincipled enemy of Cortes seized her with all her lading, including some valuable pearls.

XV. Chagrined by these unfortunate results, Cortes resolved to proceed in person to explore the vast ocean, fondly imagining, that, he should yet make discoveries that would give him new claims to consideration among his contemporaries. Three vessels were immediately prepared in the port of Coantepeque, and the Spanish adventurers in his vicinity, restless as their leader, flocked to his standard with full confidence of bettering their condition. Accompanied by Andres de Tapia and several other officers, he sailed for Santa Cruz in 1535, with as many colonists and soldiers as his ships would carry: and having arrived there, after a prosperous voyage, he sent back the ships for the remainder of his people. The second voyage was not so fortunate. The vessels were separated by a gale of wind near the river St. Peter and St. Paul, and one only arrived at the port where Cortes anxiously awaited them. But the provisions, of which he began to be greatly in want, were on board of another, which was stranded on the coast near Xalisco; the third was driven into the bay of Guayaval, so called from the many guava trees with

which its shores were covered. Famine soon followed this misfortune. Twenty-three of the soldiers perished of hunger, and the rest were gradually sinking to the grave, when Cortes re-embarked with fifty of his best men to seek the lost ships. He found them in the positions we have described, and having refitted them with much labour brought them to Santa Cruz. He directed the provisions to be served to the famished soldiers with great precaution, but several died from the effects of their indulgence. Leaving at this place part of his people with provisions for a year, and promising to send them timely relief, he departed in pursuit of further discoveries; and amidst dangers and privations of every description, landed in California and surveyed the greater part of that vast peninsula and the gulph which divides it from New Spain, since called the Vermillion sea. Such a discovery would have illustrated the name of an ordinary adventurer, but could add nothing to his reputation; nor did it in any respect repay the expenses of the expedition. But it was, however, a very valuable service rendered to Spain, since, by it, a considerable portion of the great country of New Mexico was made known; and he has the merit of reducing under the Spanish dominion more than five hundred leagues of territory, and particularly the provinces of Cinaloa, Sibola and Quivira.*

XVI. The inconsiderable fruit of these labours would have discouraged any less sanguine and enterprising man; but Cortes having received tidings of some large cities in the country of Cibola, rich in metallic treasures, said to have been visited by a certain Father de Niza; and that the Viceroy Mendoza was preparing to explore it, resolved to fit out another expedition, of three vessels, which

* Herrera. B. Diaz.

he gave in charge to Francisco de Ulloa. This squadron sailed from Acapulco, on the twenty-eighth day of July, 1539. One vessel was lost soon after sailing; the others explored the coast northward to the Gulph of California, and also a part of that great sea, and thence proceeded beyond the island of Cedars upon the westesn shore of the Peninsula. The mariners suffered much from tempestuous weather and from cold, in thirty degrees of latitude. From the Isle of Cedars, Ulloa sent home his consort, and with his own vessel prosecuted the voyage, but he was never after heard of. The large and regularly built cities, the rich mines and polished inhabitants of which Father Niza had greatly vaunted, were never discovered.

XVII. But even these ungrateful labours, Cortes was not permitted to pursue in peace. Mendoza claimed, as viceroy, dominion over every spot on which the Spanish standard was planted; and sent his agents into the countries newly discovered by Cortes, which the latter by his convention with the emperor, conceived to belong exclusively to his jurisdiction. Wearied at length with resisting these encroachments on his rights, and with soliciting in vain the justice of his king, who scarce regarded his repeated applications, he resolved once more to visit Spain, and to present in person, his claims for the remuneration of his vast expenditure and meritorious services.*

But time had already diminished the greatness of his actions, and they were paralleled and even eclipsed by the richer conquests in Peru. His declining years forbade all hope of farther service, and the gratitude of kings to powerless subjects, is not greater than that of subjects to powerless kings. But in discussing his claims, however, upon the

* In his several attempts at discovery in the south sea, Cortes expended the enormous sum of 300,000 ducats.

emperor, the casuist, might very plausibly demand, what were in truth his merits, which called for acknowledgments greater than he had already received. Cortes was a brave and a successful soldier, an able one unquestionably, and his ability demanded respect; but the motives of his conduct were not less selfish and scarce more elevated than those of the hardy pikeman who followed his banner, that he might indulge the lusts which gold could gratify. He had acquired for his king a wide empire, but this was an incident, resulting from the gratification of his own ambition. He had received too, a portion of this empire, which gave him a princely revenue, and rendered him the envy of his compatriots, who carelessly listened to complaints of restriction on powers and profits which they deemed already too great. He was received by the emperor coldly; his ministers treated him sometimes with negligence, at others, with insolence. His grievances were unredressed, and several years were spent in fruitless application to official agents—an employment the most irksome and revolting to a spirit accustomed to command. Yet neither age nor cold neglect had power to chill the ruling passion of his soul. The love of distinction led him a volunteer in the train of the emperor, to the siege of Algiers; where the only remarkable circumstance told of him, is, his loss of two emeralds of extraordinary value. Returning from Africa, he retired to a village near Seville, in which he died, on the twenty-first December, one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, in the sixty-second year of his age.

It is a source of philosophical pleasure to trace the physical qualities and peculiar habits of men who have distinguished themselves by extraordinary influence over their species; and seeking with delight the germs of their power, in their organization

and temperament, we may, possibly, in the lapse of time, from the comparison of their conduct with their physical formation, extricate some principles which may aid us in the prompt, and just appreciation of individual character. Bernal Diaz has left us some traits of his General, which we could scarce have obtained from any other hand. He was of middle stature, and strongly framed; of a pale complexion, the ordinary hue of thought; with a grave countenance. His eyes were mild and serious, and his features were, if faulty, too small. His beard and hair were black and scanty. His chest was broad and his body spare, but he afterwards became corpulent. His limbs were well moulded, but his legs somewhat bowed. He was an excellent horseman and dexterous in the use of arms. His skill in the latter did him essential service in many rencontres, which in his youth grew out of an amorous disposition. His manners were simple and affable, but dignified; commanding the love and respect of all who approached him. In his dress he followed the fashion of the time, avoiding all excess of ornament. He usually wore around his neck, a small chain of gold of exquisite workmanship, from which hung a medal, bearing on one side a highly wrought virgin and child, and on the reverse, a head of St. John the Baptist: On his finger a valuable diamond, and in his cap of black velvet, another golden medal. In latter life he substituted for this a plain cloth cap without ornament. His table was magnificently attended by many officers and pages, and served with massive gold and silver plate; but, whilst he provided sumptuous entertainment for others, he was indifferent to his own fare; commonly eating of the plainest food, and drinking sparingly of wine and water. From his early studies he had a tincture of learning, and like most men of strong character was an able rhetori-

cian. As in this age, devotion was not less essential than courage to the character of an accomplished cavalier, he was remarkably devout, and often worshipped the Holy Virgin and his tutelary saints, Peter, James, and John the Baptist. His ordinary oath was “by my conscience,” and when vexed by his followers, he would say, “oh, may you repent it.” When very angry, the veins of his throat and forehead, were singularly swelled, but he rarely gave vent to his wrath, by speech. He was patient under insults or injuries, and seldom resented the rude abuse of his soldiers, which was sometimes extremely gross, but generally bade them “be silent,” or “to go away in God’s name, lest, he should cause them to be punished.” In military affairs his firmness was most remarkable. He adhered pertinaciously to his own opinions, though he received with much respect those of his officers. He was strictly attentive to discipline; constantly went the rounds in person during the night, visiting the quarters of the soldiers, and severely reprimanding those he found without their armour and appointments.

He was very fond of play, both at cards and dice, and while playing, was affable and good humoured. Like the most eminent captain of the present day, he could sleep in every situation. When on a march, he would, wrapped in his cloak, take his siesta, beneath a tree, in the heaviest rain or most fervid sun. In youth he was liberal, or, more properly speaking, prodigal; but he was accused of having grown avaricious in maturer age; and the indulgence of this passion may have caused the falling off of many friends. Yet no adventurer to America, from its first discoverer, could boast more faithful adherents. His hardy veterans often complained of unequal partition of treasure and lands, but they could never resist his voice when he would

rouse them to new perils, and new triumphs. Great indeed must have been his power over all he would subdue, when the injured Indian worshipped him as a benificent divinity.

Cortes was buried with great pomp, in the chapel of the Dukes of Medina Sidonia, but his remains were, afterwards, according to his will, transported to New Spain. He left several children, legitimate and illegitimate. Of the former, there was one son, the heir of his wealth and honours, and four daughters; one of whom died unmarried, but the others, were richly and honourably wedded: Of the latter, there were two sons, one by his interpreter *Marina*, and another by a lady called *De Hermosilla*, and three daughters, one by an Indian woman of Cuba, and the others by a Mexican; to each of these he bequeathed large fortunes.

Within a few months after the capture of the city of Mexico, the conquerors overran the countries adjacent to the Mexican kingdom, and which were entirely subjected by the emperor. The more distant dependencies, and the countries of New Spain, over which the Mexican power had not reached, did not so readily submit to the strangers. In their acquisition, the Spaniards underwent many sufferings, and committed many crimes. A short notice of their principal enterprizes, of this character, is due to this place, whilst a full description of the countries conquered, belongs to the account of Modern Mexico.

XIX. The provinces of Honduras and Nicaragua, having been entered from several quarters by the Spanish adventurers, its government was claimed by rival chiefs. The valleys of the country were reported to be extremely fertile; and the richness of the mines of Ulancho, were highly famed. Moved by these considerations, the contending parties poured their squadrons over these districts, sweeping

away the scanty stores of the natives and adding to the horrors of famine the worst evils of slavery. Between Saavedra who occupied Honduras as the lieutenant of Cortes, and Pedrarias who had seized on Nicaragua, a compact had been framed, after some skirmishing, by which their pretensions were referred to the royal council. The prospect of peaceful colonization which arose from this measure, was unfortunately destroyed by the Audiencia of Cuba; which claimed jurisdiction over the whole territory, as a royal dependency, on account of the explorations of Gonzalez. They appointed Diego Lopez de Salcedo its governor; who, attended by a competent military force, compelled the submission of Saavedra and several of the agents of Pedrarias, all of whom, he sent prisoners to Hispaniola. He afterwards marched to the town of Leon, near the western shore of Lake Nicaragua, suffering the extremity of famine, and inflicting the most horrible cruelties on the natives, who, sorely oppressed, sought every opportunity to slay their tyrants. So great was the wretchedness of the unfortunate Indian race, that as a measure of deliverance they resorted to the expedient unsuccessfully adopted by their fellow sufferers of Haiti, abandoning every species of agriculture in hopes of driving their enemies by famine from the land; and that they might not perpetuate a race of slaves, they refrained for more than two years from conjugal embraces. Salcedo's claim of jurisdiction over Nicaragua, was founded on the want of authority in Pedrarias, who, having been superseded by the appointment of Pedro de los Rios, to the government of Darien, had avoided an immediate inquiry into his administration, by retiring to the town of Leon, where he continued to exercise his former powers. The inhabitants of this town gladly accepted Salcedo, in order to avoid a journey of three hundred leagues, on public affairs

to Panama. Of the adventurers to America, though it is a bold word to speak, perhaps none were more covetous than Salcedo. To gratify this passion, he overturned every thing that had been established at Leon, depriving the old colonists of their possessions that he might sell them to his own followers, producing such a general confusion, and inaction, amongst Indians and Spaniards, that the mines were no longer wrought, nor the country cultivated. The distress for food became so intolerable, that the Indians preyed on each other like the wild beasts of the forest.

On the petition of the colonists of Nicaragua, the emperor established there a separate government, to which, having learned the death of Gonzalez, he appointed Pedrarias, and he commanded Salcedo to confine himself to the province of Honduras, and De los Rios, to that of Panama. The agents of Pedrarias seized upon the former, together with his principal officers, and committed them to prison, where Salcedo was assailed by an hundred claimants, seeking redress for injuries of a public and private nature. But an accommodation being subsequently effected, the rivals agreed upon certain limits for their respective jurisdiction, and, Salcedo returned after a long imprisonment to Truxillo. With a mind embittered by ill success, by the desire of vengeance, by remorse and the reprimands of the king, he continued to govern the province of Honduras until 1530, when he died most probably by poison, detested alike by the Spaniards and the natives: Andres de Cereceda succeeded him by his appointment. But his government was not more approved than that of his predecessor. For three years the territory was torn by intestine struggles, and war with the Indians, which on account of the want of arms proved more fatal to the Spaniards than their usual combats. During that period the colonists

had no intercourse with the mother country, nor in all that time had any vessel arrived at their ports. Diego de Albitez came out with the commission of governor, but was shipwrecked on the coast, and died soon after he reached Truxillo, transmitting his power to Cereceda. This officer continued for several years to conduct the affairs of the colony, very much to the dissatisfaction of the settlers. His presence inspired universal dread, and his wars with the Indians were marked by the most savage cruelty. Having reduced the people of Truxillo to the lowest state of destitution, he removed them from that town to the Vale of Ulancho, famed for its gold mines, where he founded the town of Buena Esperanza. Their condition being little improved here, and growing weary of his tyranny, they sent messengers to Guatemala, to solicit the protection of Pedro Alvarado, who, thereupon, despatched an officer to aid his countrymen, and soon after, followed himself. He established a colony at the Port of Cavallos, founded the town of Nombre de Dios, and opened a communication by it, with the province of Guatemala. In 1536, Francisco de Montejo was appointed by the king, as a remuneration for his sufferings in Yucatan, governor of Honduras, and the country was appended to the Viceroyalty of Mendoza. Under Montejo, the political condition of the province was little improved, but under his successors, the colonists increased, and the province, equitably ruled, became a valuable possession. For several years, the trade between Spain and the isles of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, passed through the town of San Juan del Puerto de Cavallos.

The province of Nicaragua, was subjected to a fate much similar to that of Honduras. The Governor, Pedrarias de Avila, died in July, 1531, at the town of Leon, having nominated for his suc-

sor the Licentiate Castanada, whose administration had no other rule than the interest or caprice of its head. In 1534 Rodrigo de Centrenas the son-in-law of Pedrarias, who married the lady promised to the murdered Basco de Nunes, was appointed governor. He restored the province to order, and directed the exploration of the river St. Juan, by which the Lake of Nicaragua pours its waters into the Atlantic. Honduras and Nicaragua were annexed to the Captaincy General of Guatemala.

XX. In the course of our narrative we have traced the fate of three of the principal captains employed in the conquest of Mexico; of Cortes, Sandoval and De Olid; we now proceed to notice that of the fourth, Don Pedro de Alvarado. After his conquest of Guatemala in 1523, he remained in that country as the deputy of Cortes, until 1526; when, about the time of the return of Cortes from Honduras, he sailed for Europe, to demand from the king, authority for its government, independent of Cortes, as the reward for his services. He participated in some degree in the evils which the malice of the enemies of the conquerors brought upon them. But, on the whole, his reception was as favorable as he could have desired. He married a lady of high rank, had all his repartimientos and other private property confirmed, and received the commission he solicited. Upon his voyage to America he was accompanied by many of his relatives and friends, and cavaliers of rank. He was earnestly charged by the emperor, who was not less desirous than his predecessor to discover a short route to the Spice Islands, to employ himself in exploring the Southern Ocean. Soon after his arrival at Guatemala he caused a careful survey to be made of its coast, and equipped a squadron of eight vessels, with which, instead of steering to the west, he resolved to proceed to Peru, and participate with

Pizarro in the wonderful wealth of that region. In this purpose, however, he was delayed, by the interference of the royal officers of his province, who there, as elsewhere, claiming a power independent of the governor, was upon ill terms with him, and sought to thwart his designs. The Audiencia of Mexico, too, claiming supervisory jurisdiction over him, also commanded him to desist, and at their instance, the king absolutely forbade his entrance upon the territories assigned to Pizarro. But the daily growth of splendid rumours from South America constantly irritated his avarice and ambition, his dominating passions; and at length, hearing of the wealth of the province of Quito, and believing, or feigning to believe, that it was not within the jurisdiction of Pizarro, he sailed with the intention of invading it, from the port of Possession, in 1534. The fame of this armament and the high character of its commander furnished him abundant troops, among whom were many of the veteran conquerors, who like the General were weary of the dull inanity of peace, and longed for the exciting scenes of adventurous war. He embarked with five hundred men, of whom, two hundred and twenty were mounted, on excellent horses, and equipped according to the times, at all points for action. He landed at Port Viejo, and thence despatched his pilot, with instructions before returning to Guatemala, to survey the coast beyond the limits of Peru.

No feat in the new world surpasses, perhaps none equals, this journey of Alvarado, to Quito, in bold daring, and patient suffering. Without a knowledge of the country, or proper guides to conduct him, he attempted to march directly to Quito, by following the course of the river Guayaquil and crossing the ridge of the Andes towards its head. But in this route, one of the most impracticable in America, his troops suffered much in forcing their

way through the forests and marshes of the low grounds and from the intense cold of the mountains.* In crossing the latter his progress was impeded by deep snow, which frequently so blinded the troops, that they could not see their way. Many of the Indians were frozen to death, and others lost their toes, and some their feet by the frost. Even the aspiring and invincible spirit of the General sank under the misery around him, and he repented of having, for the gratification of his ambition, undertaken such an enterprize. The avaricious soldiers, who had gathered in the plains of Guayaquil, much gold and many precious stones, mocked at the proclamation, which to encourage them, he published, for each soldier to take what he desired from the mass reserved for the royal treasury, and their hard earned riches were returned to the torrent beds of the Andes. Before the army reached the plain of Quito, one fifth of the men, and one half of the horses had perished: and the remainder were so much dispirited and worn down, as to be almost unfit for service. Yet, when he arrived there, he found an obstacle to his further progress which proved insurmountable; an army, not of feeble Indians, but of veteran and conquering Spaniards, was drawn up against him. Pizarro having received an account of Alvarado's armament, had despatched Almagro with some troops to oppose the

* At one time, the army in passing through a country covered with canes suffered severely from thirst, but was relieved by the discovery of considerable quantities of water between the joints of the cane. Don Ulloa, Book V. Chap. I. says "their usual length is between six and eight toises, and the largest do not exceed six inches in diameter.—At full moon the tubes are entirely, or nearly full of water, and with the decrease of the moon, the water ebbs, till at the conjunction, little or none is found. The water during its decrease appears to be turbid, but about the time of the full moon is as clear as crystal. The Indians add another particular, that water is not found in all the joints, one having it, and, another not, alternately."

formidable invader. Though surprised at the sight of this unexpected foe, Alvarado advanced boldly to meet him; but the interposition of some moderate men on either side, prevented a fatal contest between subjects of the same king; effecting an amicable accommodation, by which Alvarado engaged to return to his government, upon receiving from Almagro one hundred and twenty thousand pesos, to defray the expense of his armament. Most of his followers remained in the country.

Upon his return to Guatemala, Alvarado had the mortification to discover that his expedition to Peru had met with the severe reprehension of the king. Maldonado, one of the royal auditors of Mexico, was charged with an inquiry into his government and public conduct, with authority to send him prisoner to Castile. But, he avoided this painful examination by returning to Spain, and casting himself on the clemency of his master; passing in his way, through Honduras, where he rendered a great service to the colonists, relieving their necessities, and restoring order and regular government: a service which he hoped might, in the scales of justice, weigh against his disobedience in Quito.* He seems to have been favorably treated in Spain, since he returned to Guatemala with enlarged powers,† under which, he transferred the Adelantado Montejo from Honduras to Chiapa, sentencing him to a heavy fine for maladministration in the former. By a new convention with the king, he engaged to send forth an armament to the north-western coast of America, for the purpose of discovery. For this purpose he fitted out, in 1541, a squadron of fourteen vessels, on board of which he put eight hundred soldiers, one hundred and fifty of whom were horsemen, with many Indians, and a

* 1536.

† 1539.

large quantity of provisions and military stores. This fleet put to sea with directions to await him in some port of New Galicia, whilst he visited the city of Mexico, to confer with the Viceroy on the direction which should be ultimately given to it. Thence, he proceeded to the western coast, where, being solicited by the colonists of Guadalaxara to aid them in quelling an insurrection of the Chechemecas, he lost his life in clambering over a precipitous mountain; a horse and its rider, slipping from a height above him, and overthrowing him in their fall. His death was sincerely mourned by his family and dependents, and by his royal master, who lost a faithful servant, that spared neither his person nor fortune, to promote the royal interests.

XXI. Hitherto, in no instance had the Spanish monarchy selected a worse agent than Nuño de Gusman. Recommended solely by family influence, he had been appointed Governor of Panuco, whilst Cortes was performing his perilous journey to Honduras. His administration of this province was marked by great violence, not only against the unfortunate natives, but upon his own countrymen, who had been established there by the Conqueror. His activity was incessant, but, it was chiefly employed in creating confusion. With an overweening opinion of his own capacity, he was envious of the reputation of Cortes, and desirous to reduce under his own dominion, a large portion of the territories assigned to others. He contested the right of the Governor of Mexico, to the country conquered and colonized by him; despatched an expedition to the Rio de las Palmas, which he knew to be within the jurisdiction granted to Pamphilo de Narvaez; and invaded the province of Mechoacan, under the most frivolous pretences. Called to preside over the Audiencia of New Spain, he introduced discord among its members, by which means

he obtained the principal direction of its affairs; in which he employed his power to oppress the first *conquistadores*, and particularly such as were friendly to their general. His violence and corruption rendered him universally odious; and when he learned that he was to be superseded by the appointment of a new audiencia, he entered upon the exploration of the country on the north-west of Mexico, as much from a view of withdrawing from an inquiry into his conduct, as by some valuable discovery, to make his peace with the king.

His conduct on this expedition, was marked by the most opposite qualities. The courage, industry and perseverance, the patience under pain, hunger and thirst, the elasticity of mind, which no evil could destroy, every where so surprisingly displayed by the Spaniards in America, were not wanting in him; but, they were attended by a wanton cruelty, and disregard of the comforts of his troops, which the Spanish leaders rarely exhibited. In passing through Mechoacan, he seized the person of Cozetzin, the king, and on some unfounded complaints, subjected him to torture, and finally, condemned him to be burned to death. The true motive of this act, was, his desire to possess the treasures of the prince. He employed five years in exploring and colonizing the province of New Galicia, which he so named; and, he penetrated into the province of Cinaloa, and other countries on the Gulph of California, and in the late Intendency of Sonora; and founded several cities, among which were Guadalaxara, Buenavista, and Compostella. So irregular and tyrannical was his course during this period, that innumerable complaints were preferred against him in the tribunals of Mexico, on which judgment of imprisonment and confiscation of his goods was rendered; and at last, in the year 1537, he was arrested by the special order of the

king, in New Galicia, and conducted to the Capital, in which he was closely confined, more than a year, and was thence sent to render an account of his administration before the royal council of the Indies, in Spain. His powerful family and many friends saved him from the punishment he merited.

XXII. The peninsula of Yucatan and the island of Cozumel, though first discovered of the provinces of New Spain, drew little of the attention of the conquerors until the year 1526, when Francisco de Montejo, a native of Salamanca and a distinguished captain of Cortes', instigated by the reports of Aguilar, of their favorable climate and productiveness, entered into stipulations with the king, to explore and colonize them. He landed on the western coast of Yucatan with five hundred soldiers, and might readily have taken with him as many more, such was the desire of emigration produced at this period by the celebrated golden cannon presented by Cortes to the king. His progress through the country was rendered difficult and unsatisfactory, by his want of knowledge of the language, and he could scarce obtain sufficient information of its topography to enable him to judge of the course and means he should adopt to subject it. Having observed that in Mexico, all the dependent countries fell upon the conquest of the principal kingdom, he supposed that, as there appeared several jurisdictions here, the conquest of the greatest would be followed by the submission of the rest. A considerable portion of the inhabitants were mild in their manners, and peaceably disposed, and very readily yielded a portion of their lands for the accommodation of the strangers: but others, were fierce and warlike, and the superior quality and condition of their arms, offensive and defensive, induced the Spaniards to believe, that they had been instructed by Guerrero, the companion of Aguilar. Montejo made many

efforts to get this Spaniard into his power, that he might serve as interpreter; but Guerrero was now a chieftain of the country, and could not be distinguished from the natives, having adopted their costume in all respects; and he was too wary to proclaim himself. During the period of four years, Montejo laboured sedulously to lay a stable foundation for his government; but his treatment of the natives finally defeated his efforts. Presuming upon their ready submission in the district which he occupied, he introduced the *repartimientos*, and distributed them as slaves. When the nature of this condition was known, the Indians speedily threw off the yoke; and as there was no political dissensions among the people of the several provinces, by which one could be made to aid in the oppression of the other, and all were true to themselves, the Spaniards were compelled to retire by the way of Campeachy; and Montejo himself returned to Mexico, whence he proceeded soon after to the government of Honduras, which, together with that of Tobasco, were added to his jurisdiction. His son was his deputy in the latter province. Montejo, as characterized by Diaz, was better constituted for civil business than for war. His conduct in both his governments display weakness. But if he were less able, he was certainly more humane, than other conquerors.

XIII. In order to complete the notice we proposed to take of the progress of the Spaniards in New Spain and its dependencies, we must not neglect the enterprize of the unfortunate Pamphilo de Narvaez, who had been so easily overcome by Cortes. Having obtained from the king a grant of the government of such countries as he should colonize between the Rio de las Palmas, and Florida, he departed from Seville, in the close of the year 1527, with five ships and six hundred men. But he was a target

against which fortune aimed her keenest arrows. He lost one of his vessels on the coast of Cuba, having seventy men and twenty horses on board; and the rest having been injured by a hurricane, he was compelled to winter at Xagua. His force was here reduced to about four hundred, with whom, after encountering several storms, he arrived on the coast of Florida, in April 1528. Without guides, and without provision, he set forth to seek the district of Appalachia, which had been falsely reported to abound with gold. He traversed the country, but, found no compensation for the labours and sufferings of his journey. A particular account of this expedition belongs to a future volume, but we may remark here, that it is not surpassed by any story of daring and misery in this eventful period. He with his whole host, three persons only excepted, perished by various ways on the northern shores of the Gulph of Mexico. The survivors after seven years of captivity, found their way, from tribe to tribe, to Mexico.

XXIV. The President of the second Audiencia of New Spain, Don Sebastian Remirez administered the government for a period of six years with distinguished ability and success; quieting the unruly spirits of the *Conquistadores*, and collecting the other emigrants into *poblados* or settlements, in which he introduced municipal regulations, similar to those of the parent State. Growing weary at length of his labours and absence from his native country, he obtained permission to return to Spain. The Spanish monarch had now resolved to establish in Mexico a government modelled on that of Castile, under a vice regal court, which should be invested with a very large portion of the royal authority, to be exercised with royal ostentation. For this high honour, Cortes was the most proper candidate; but the very qualities which rendered him most effective,

made him still obnoxious to the emperor. Had he been hated by his soldiers and the Indians, had he been extortionate, cruel and vindictive, he might have been entrusted by his king, from the conviction, that, however much he might abuse authority, he could not forcibly retain it. But the monarch continued to dread, that, the man who placed this new and splendid diadem upon his head, would pluck it off to deck his own brows: he therefore elected Don Antonio de Mendoza Viceroy of New Spain, in the year 1535. From that period, during the continuance of the Spanish power in Mexico, the vice regal government prevailed; but a particular account of its constitution belongs to the History of modern Mexico. It remains to complete this portion of our labours, to give a concise view of the condition of the Mexican nations immediately consequent upon their subjection.

XXV. The first great visible effect of the establishment of the Spaniards in America, was the astonishing and deplorable diminution of the ancient inhabitants. Wherever they had resolution to take up arms in their own defence, many perished in the unequal contest. This was particularly the case in Mexico, where the martial habits of the people, induced the most strenuous opposition; yet a great number perished under the hardships of service in the Spanish armies, in their various expeditions, worn out with the incessant toil of carrying their baggage, provisions and military stores. But these causes were of a temporary nature, and far less destructive than the inconsiderate policy with which the Spaniards established their new settlements. Before the conquest the condition of the mass of the people, under a despotic feudalism and hierarchy was abundantly wretched; the emperor, princes, nobility and priesthood possessed the whole of the lands; the governors of provinces, indulged

with impunity in the most severe exactions, and the cultivator was every where degraded. The highways swarmed with mendicants; and the want of large quadrupeds forced thousands of men to perform the labour of beasts of burthen, in the transportation of the maize, cotton, hides, and other commodities, sent in tribute from the provinces to the capital. The conquest rendered the state of the peasant still more deplorable. All Indian property in land and goods was invested in the conquerors, and this atrocious principle was recognized by the law, which assigned to the Indians a small portion of ground around the newly erected churches. Some exceptions however were made in favor of a few nobles, whose descendants, at this day, enjoy the estates possessed by their ancestors under Montezuma. The system of *encomiendas* was introduced, under which large districts were granted to the *conquistadores*, to the Catholic clergy, and to the favorites of the principal officers of the government, to which, as in Poland and Russia, the inhabitants were deemed slaves appurtenant. Instead of settling in the vallies occupied by the natives, where the fertility of the soil would have amply rewarded the diligence of the planter, these grantees located themselves frequently in the mountainous districts, to search for mines of precious metals, which were the chief objects of their activity. To prosecute their favorite projects the services of the natives were indispensable. They were accordingly compelled to abandon their ancient habitations in the vallies, and driven in crowds to the mountains. This sudden transition from the sultry plains to the frigid highlands, exorbitant labour, scanty and unwholesome nourishment, and despondency, occasioned by ceaseless oppression, of whose end they had no hope, melted them away with frightful rapidity. These causes, together with the introduc-

tion of the small pox, so reduced the population, that the accounts of its former extent appeared almost incredible.

It is due to christianity and its pious ministers, to state, that the missionaries generally, early espoused the defence of the natives. To their powerful interposition the Americans were indebted for every regulation tending to mitigate the rigour of their fate, and the clergy in the Spanish settlements, regular as well as secular, were long considered by the Indians as their guardians, to whom they had recourse under the hardships and exactions to which they were exposed. Although the Spanish Government, in the first instance, encouraged and sustained the odious system of *repartimiento*, yet when enlightened by the representations of the clergy as to its fatal effect, the ministry made earnest endeavours to abrogate it. As the life serfs, which had been granted, fell in, they were not redistributed; and many wholesome decrees, for ensuring the liberty of the Mexicans were proclaimed; but the intentions of the monarch and the authority of the laws, were generally defeated by the uncontrollable avarice of individuals, who trusting to their distance for impunity, continued to consider and treat the Indians as slaves. The governors themselves, and other officers, frequently as indigent and rapacious as the adventurers over whom they presided, instead of checking, participated in their excesses. At a later period Charles III. wholly abolished the *encomiendas* and *repartimientos*, but the ingenuity of the Spanish officers still found means to keep the wretched peasant, though nominally free, in actual slavery. The best condition of the Mexicans under the Spanish polity, as represented in a memoir, presented by the bishop and chapter of Mechoacan, to the king in 1579 is not enviable.

"The population of New Spain is composed of three classes. Whites or Spaniards, Indians and *Castes*. In the hands of the first, all the property and wealth of the kingdom are centered. The Indians and the Castes cultivate the soil, are in the service of the better sort of people, and live by the work of their hands. Hence, between the Indians and the whites, are those opposing interests, and mutual hatred which universally exist between those who possess all, and those who possess nothing: between masters and those who live in servitude. On the one hand, we behold envy and discord, deception and theft, and on the other, arrogance, severity, and the desire to oppress. These evils spring every where from great inequality of condition, but are rendered more terrific here, because there exists no intermediate state."

"The Indians and races of mixed blood, are in a state of extreme humiliation. The colour of the first, their ignorance, and especially their poverty, remove them to an infinite distance from the whites. The privileges which the laws seem to concede them are more injurious than beneficial. Shut up in a narrow space of 1640 feet (600 *varas*) radius, assigned by law to the Indian villages, they have individually, no property, and are bound to cultivate the lands of the community, from which they receive a bare support. The law prohibits the mixture of Castes, the residence of whites in the Indian villages, and of the natives among the Spaniards. This state of insulation opposes obstacles to civilization. The Indians are governed by themselves, their magistrates being of the same race. In every village eight or ten old Indians live at the expense of the rest, in the most complete idleness, exercising an authority founded on a pretended elevation of birth, or on an artful policy, transmitted from father to son: the only inhabitants of the village who speak

Spanish, they have the greatest interest in maintaining among their countrymen, the most profound ignorance, and they contribute most, to perpetuate prejudices, and the ancient barbarity of manners. Forbidden by the law to enter into any contract, or debt, beyond five piastres in value, the natives can aspire only to the employment of common labourers, or mechanics. This and other like provisions, intended for their defence, are arms in the hands of their oppressors. Such a union of deplorable circumstances has produced an indolence of mind, and that state of apathy which renders man insensible to hope and fear."

"The Indians and the Castes are in the hands of magistrates of districts whose immorality has not a little contributed to their misery. So long as the *Alcacias Mayores* subsisted in Mexico, the Alcades considered themselves as merchants who had the monopoly of commerce in their provinces, from which they drew, from 30,000 to 200,000 dollars profit in the short space of five years. These usurious magistrates compelled the Indians to purchase at arbitrary prices a number of cattle, by which means they became their debtors. Under pretence of recovering the capital and usury, the Alcade disposed of the Indians, the whole year round, as absolute slaves."

"By the establishment of Intendencies, the government sought to put an end to the oppressions of the *repartimientos*. *Subdelagados* were substituted for the Alcades Mayores, to whom every sort of traffic was prohibited. But as no salaries were assigned to them, nor any fixed emolument, the evil grew worse. The Alcades administered justice impartially, whenever their own interests were not concerned. The Subdelagados, without revenue, believed themselves justified in employing any means to procure themselves a comfortable subsistence.

Hence resulted the perpetual oppression of the poor, and indulgence to the rich, and the shameful traffic of justice." In this state of degradation and misery, heightened by occasional rays of intellectual light, the Indian and the mixed races continued, until the breaking up of the Spanish power in America. An event which will one day promote their welfare, but which yet, we fear, has not greatly ameliorated the condition of the great mass of the natives.

A P P E N D I X.

NOTE A. p. 24.

We refer the reader, to M. de Humboldt's work on America, entitled, "Researches concerning the institutions and monuments of the Ancient Inhabitants of America, with descriptions &c." for copies of several portions of Mexican MSS. other than those we have given in this work; we refer him, more particularly, to the Four Epochs of nature, painted, according to the Mexican Mythology and Cosmogony; to the Signs of the days in the Mexican Almanac, extracted from the Manuscript of Veletri; the copy of the map of the emigration of the Aztecs published by Gemelli, of which we have spoken in the text: the excerpts also, from the Borgian Manuscript at Veletri; and the fragments taken from the *Codex Telleriano Remensis*, in the library of Paris.



NOTE B. p. 26.

In preparing the following list of writers on the ancient history of Mexico we are actuated by the double motive, of presenting the vouchers for the many extraordinary facts in the preceding pages, and of showing farther the extent and power of the Mexican language and picture writing, by direct reference to the authors who have written in the one, and derived essential aid from the other. We follow the Abbé Clavigero in classing the writers in the century to which they belong.

Writers of the Sixteenth Century. The first in time and value is Cortes himself; he wrote four long letters to Charles V. which have been published in most languages of Europe; the first in Seville in 1522. They are well written, have the stamp of sincerity and are entitled to much respect.

Bernal Diaz Castillo was a soldier and a conqueror, but not a man of letters; he wrote "*A true History of the Conquest of New Spain*," originally printed in Madrid in 1632, which has been translated into other languages. Though not well qualified for the task he assumed, he seized the pen to do justice to the merits of himself and other *conquistadores*, which he deemed shamefully overlooked by other writers. He was a witness of the greatest portion of the facts which he narrates, and this circumstance, with his simplicity and sincerity, gives him a claim to full credit. He compiled his work in the city of Guatemala, of which he was Regidor, in 1572.

Alonzo de Mata and Alonzo de Ojeda, were conquerors and writers of commentaries on the conquest. Their compilations have been used by Herrera and Torquemada.

The anonymous Conqueror, is the author, to whom the name is given, of a very curious and much esteemed relation found in the collection of Ramusio, under the title of "*The relation of a Gentleman who attended Ferdinand Cortes.*" This work is a valuable compend of the manners and customs of the Mexicans.

Francisco Lopez de Gomara wrote a *History of New Spain*, from information obtained from the lips of the conquerors, and the writings of the first missionaries. It was printed at Saragossa, in 1534, and contains a full, but not very accurate account, of the Mexican laws, religious rites, festivals, and method for the computation of time.

Toribio de Benavente, a Franciscan monk, and one of the first twelve missionaries to Mexico, known commonly, from his evangelical poverty, by the Mexican name of Motolinia, wrote "*The History of the Indians of New Spain,*" published in one folio volume. He wrote, also, a work on the Mexican Calender, the original of which was long preserved in Mexico.

Andrea d'Olmas, also a Franciscan Monk, acquired the Mexican, Totonacan, and Huaxtocalcan languages, and composed a grammar and dictionary of each; he compiled also in Spanish, a treatise on Mexican antiquities; and in the Mexican language, a collection of the exhortations used by the natives to their children, a specimen of which, we have given in the 18th chapter of the third volume of our Cabinet, and the first of the history of Mexico.

Bernardo Sahagun another Franciscan, was employed more than sixty years in the instruction of the Mexicans. He compiled several works in the Mexican and Spanish languages; among which, was a universal Dictionary of the Mexican language, comprising the geography, the religion, and the political and natural history of the Aztecs. This work of immense erudition and labour was sent to the royal historiographer of America resident at Madrid, by the Marquis of Villanauque, viceroy of Mexico, and is supposed to be still preserved in some library of Spain. He wrote also, the general history of New Spain, in four volumes, which were deposited in the library of the convent of Franciscans, in Tolosa de Navara.

Alfonso Turita, a Spanish lawyer and judge of Mexico, wrote in Spanish, "*A compendious Relation of the Lords there were in Mexico, and their difference; of the Laws, usages, and customs of the Mexicans; of the tributes which they paid, &c.*" The original manuscript in folio was placed in the library of the college of St. Peter and St. Paul, of the Jesuits of Mexico. From this work, said to be well written, much has been extracted by Clavigero. Juan de Tobar, a noble Jesuit of Mexico, wrote on the ancient kingdoms of Mexico, Acolhuacan, and Tlacopan, by order of the viceroy of New Spain. His MSS. served to guide Acosta in his work.

Joseph D'Acosta, a Jesuit celebrated in Spanish literature, after a residence of some years in both Americas, published in Spanish, "The Natural and Moral History of the Indians." at Seville, in 1589. This work was much valued at the time of its publication, but its religious views, and defectiveness in many important matters render it exceptionable at present.

Fernando Pimentel Ixtlilxochitl, son of Caonacotzin, last king of Acolhuacan, and Antonia de Tobar Cano Montezuma Ixtlilxochitl, a decendent of the royal houses of Mexico and Acolhuacan, at the request of the count Benevente and the viceroy Don Luis de Velasco, wrote letters on the genealogy of the kings of Acolhuacan, and the antiquities of that kingdom.

Antonio Pimentel Ixtlilxochitl, son of Fernando Pimentel, wrote historical memoirs of the kingdom of Acolhuacan, by which Torquemada, was assisted; and from it the calculation of the annual expenditure in the palace of Nezahualcoyotl, greatgrandfather of that author has been taken. (See Mex. Vol. I. p. 148.)

Taddeo de Niza, a noble Indian of Tlascalla, wrote, in the year 1548, by order of the viceroy, the history of the conquest, which was subscribed by thirty other nobles of Tlascala.

Gabriel d'Agala, a noble of Tezcuco, wrote in the Mexican language, Historical commentaries, on Mexican affairs from the year 1243 to the year 1562.

Juan Ventura Zapata è Mendoza, a noble of Tlascala, wrote also in the Mexican language, the Chronicle of Tlascala, comprising the history of that nation, from its arrival in Anahuac, to the year 1589.

Pedro Ponce, a noble Indian, rector of Tzompahuacan compiled in Spanish, an account of the Gods, and the rites of Mexican Paganism.

The Chiefs of Colhuacan prepared the annals of that kingdom; a copy of which, was in the above mentioned library of the Jesuits.

Christoval del Castillo, a Mexican Mestee, wrote the travels of the Aztecas to Anahuac. The MSS. was deposited in the library of the college of the Jesuits at Tepozatlan.

Diego Mugnoz Camarga, a noble Mestee of Tlascala, wrote in Spanish, the history of the City and Republic of Tlascala, Torquemada used this work, and there are copies of it in Spain and Mexico.

Fernando d'Alba Ixtlilxochitl, a Tezeucan, and descendant in a right line, from the kings of Acolhuacan, very conversant with the antiquities of his nation, compiled, at the request of the viceroy of Mexico, several learned and valuable works, viz. The History of New Spain, The History of the Chechemecan Lords, An Epitome of the History of the kingdom of Tezcuco, Historical memoirs of the Toltecas, and other nations of Anahuac. All these works, written in Spanish, were preserved in the library of St. Peter and St. Paul, and were used by Clavigero. The author was so cautious in writing, that, in order to remove any grounds for suspicion of fiction, he made his accounts conform

to the historical paintings which he inherited from his ancestors.

Juan Batista Pomar, of Tezeuco, or Cholula, a descendant from a bastard of the royal house of Tezeuco, wrote Historical Memoirs of that kingdom, of which Torquemada has availed himself.

Domingo de San. Anton. Munon Chimalpain, a noble Indian of Mexico, compiled in the Spanish language four works, much esteemed, viz. The American Chronicle, from the year 1068, to the year 1597, The History of the conquest of Mexico, by the Spaniards, Original accounts of the kingdoms of Acolhuacan, of Mexico, and other provinces: and Historical Commentaries, from the year 1064 to the year 1521. These works were deposited in the library of the college of St. Peter and St. Paul. Boturini had copies of them, as well as of almost all the works of the Indians we have mentioned.

Fernando d'Alvarado Tezozomoc, an Indian of Mexico, wrote in Spanish, a Mexican Chronicle, about the year 1598, which was preserved in the above mentioned library.

The famous protector of the Indians, Bartolomé de Las Casas prepared several works relative to Mexican History, the most extensive, and probably the most valuable, viz. the History of the Climate and Soil, of the countries of America, &c. and a General History of America have not been published. His great zeal for the Indians has discredited his authority in relation to their affairs.

Agustino Davilla, and Padillo, a noble Dominican of Mexico, preacher to Philip III. royal Historiographer of America, and Archbishop of the Island of St. Domingo, besides the Chronicle of the Dominicans of Mexico, printed in Madrid, in 1596, and the History of New Spain and Florida, printed in Valladolid, in 1632, wrote the ancient History of the Mexicans, employing materials collected by Fernando Duran, a Dominican of Tezcoco.

Doctor Cervantes composed Historical memoirs of Mexico, which have been used and praised by Herrera.

Antonio de Saavedra, a noble Mexican, during his voyage to Spain, wrote in twenty cantos the History of the Conquest of Mexico, and printed it in Madrid, under the Spanish Title of *El Perigrino Indiano*, in 1599. This work, says Clavigero, ought to be reckoned among the histories of Mexico, for it has nothing of Poetry but the measure.

Pedro Gutierrez de S Chiara, wrote a work upon Mexico, which is known only by the acknowledgement of its use by Betancourt.

Writers in the Seventeenth Century. Antonio de Herrera, royal Historiographer for the Indies, has compiled in four folio volumes, eight Decades of the History of America, beginning with the year 1492; together with a geographical description of the Spanish Colonies. The work was printed at Madrid, early in the seventeenth century, many editions have since been given of it, in the Spanish and other languages. An edition printed

in folio at Amberes in 1728, which we have used, is richly ornamented with plates and portraits. Although the principal design of the author was to relate the Actions of the Spaniards, he does not omit the Ancient History of the Americans, which, however, he copies mostly from Acosta and Gomara. The form of annals, which he has adopted, is excessively perplexing, and wearisome to the reader; the narration being interrupted at every step, by unconnected occurrences.

Arigo Martinez, a foreign author, although of Spanish surname, after many years residence in Mexico, wrote a History of New Spain, which was printed in that City in 1606.

Gregorio Garcia, a Dominican, composed a treatise of much erudition, on the origin of the Americans; printed in Quarto, at Valentia, in 1607, and reprinted in Madrid, in 1729. It is almost useless, dealing little in facts, and much in conjectures, feebly founded.

Juan de Torquemada, a Franciscan Spaniard, wrote a History of Mexico, under the title of the Indian Monarchy, printed in Mexico in 1614, in three large volumes, folio, which contains the most complete account of the antiquities of that country of any work published before that of Clavigero. The author who resided in Mexico from his youth, to his death, was well acquainted with the Mexican language, and, conversant with the inhabitants for more than fifty years, collected many ancient paintings, and manuscripts, and laboured on his work more than twenty years. It is, notwithstanding his care, obscured by contradictions and fables, and much superfluous learning.

Anias Villalobos, wrote in verse, a history of Mexico, from the foundation of the capital, to the year 1623. It was printed in Mexico, in that year, but is a work of little value.

Christoval Chaves Castillejo, a Spaniard, wrote about the year 1632, a volume in folio, on the origin of the Indians, and their first colonies in Anahuac.

Carlos de Siguenza e Gongora a native of Mexico, and professor of mathematics in the university of his country, was one of the most comprehensive writers on the History of Mexico. He made, at great expense, a large and valuable collection of ancient pictures and manuscripts. Besides many other works, he wrote in Spanish 1. *The Mexican Cyclography*, a work of great labour, in which, by calculating eclipses and comets, marked in the historical pictures of the Mexicans, he adjusted their epochs with ours and explained their divisions of time. 2. *The History of the Chechemecan Empire*, in which he explains the Mexican paintings relating to the emigration of the first colonies, and the events of the most ancient nations of Anahuac. 3. A long and learned dissertation on the Annunciation of the gospel in Anahuac which he believed had been made by the Apostle St. Thomas; 4. The genealogy of the Mexican kings, tracing the line as far back as the seventh century of the christian era; 5. Critical annotations on the works of Torquemada and Bernal Diaz. All these learned MSS. have perished, through the carelessness of

the author's heirs; some fragments only have been preserved in the works of Gemelli, Betancourt and Florencia.

The Ancient and Modern History of Mexico printed in the capital in 1698, under the title of *The Mexican Theatre*, is in regard to the Ancient History, an inaccurate abridgement of Torquemada.

Antonio de Solis, royal historiographer of America, has in his History of the Conquest of New Spain, given the most polished work which the Spanish language can boast in relation to America. It is condemned, however, as an affected panegyric on his hero Cortes, in which, he has sacrificed truth to embellishment.

Writers of the Eighteenth Century. Pedro Fernandez del Pulgar, successor to Solis in the office of Historiographer, has written "*The true History of the Conquest of Mexico*," with the view it is said of correcting the errors of his predecessor.

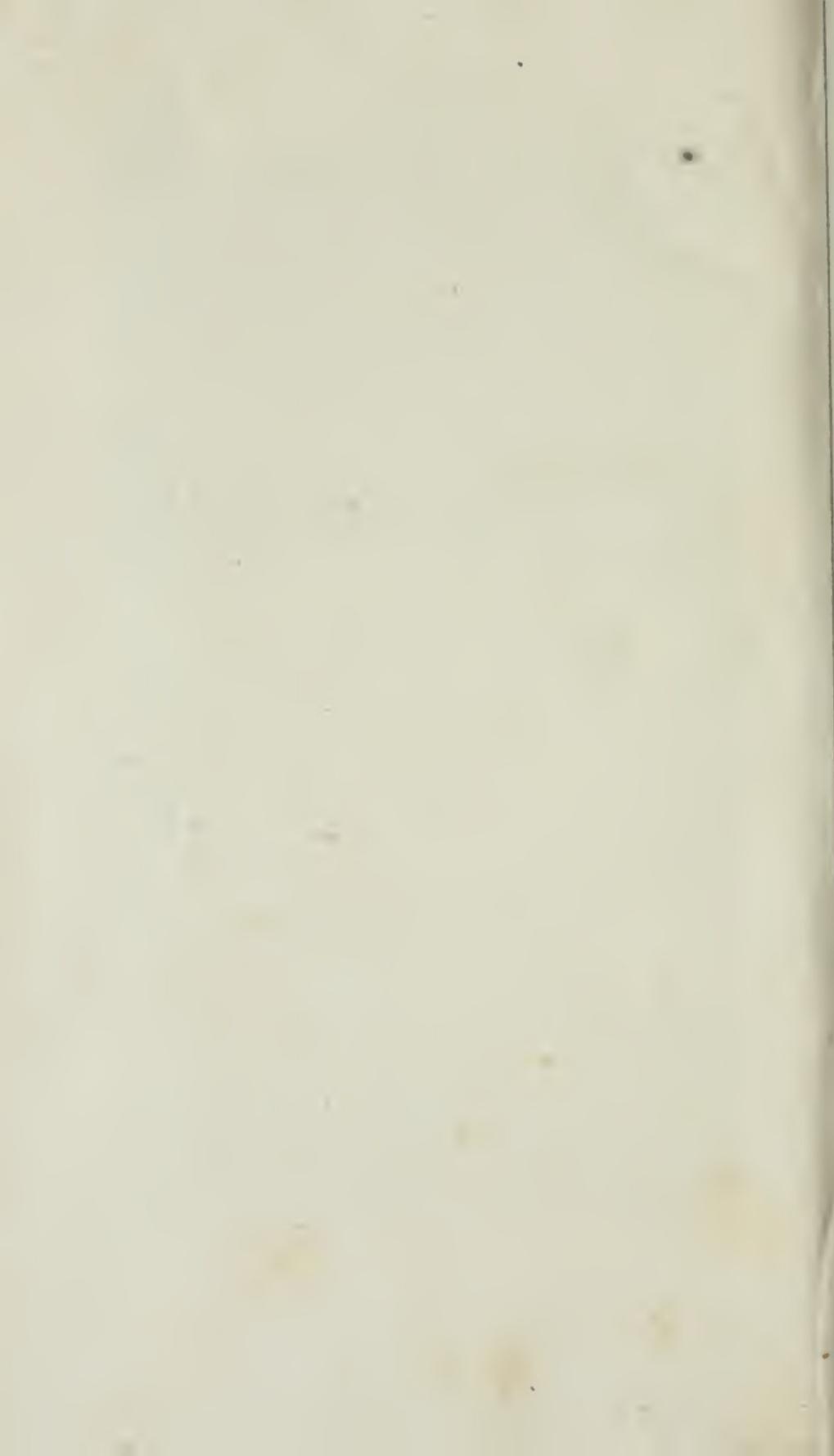
Lorenzo Boturini Benaducci, was a curious and learned gentleman of Milan, who arrived in Mexico in 1736. To qualify himself for writing the history of that kingdom, he made, during eight years that he remained there, the most diligent researches into its antiquities, acquired a considerable knowledge of its language, and by cultivating the friendship of the natives, obtained many of their ancient paintings, which he added to the copies of the valuable manuscripts then in the libraries of the monasteries. His collection of paintings and manuscripts was the largest and most select, that had ever been made, with the exception of that of Siguenza. But, before he put a hand to his work, the jealousy of the Spanish Government stripped him of his literary estate and sent him to Spain. He was acquitted of all evil design, but his collection was never restored to him. He published in Madrid in 1746, in 1 vol. 4to. a sketch of the great work he meditated. Among the collections of Boturini, were some important Mexican compends; such as, 1. Annals of the Toltecs painted on paper, with a commentary in the Mexican language; containing an account of the pilgrimage and wars of the Toltecas, the founding of their metropolis, and other occurrences until the year 1547: 2. Commentaries in the Mexican language on the History of the Aztecs from 1066 to 1316—and from 1367 to 1509: 3. A Mexican History in the Mexican language, carried back as far as the year 1406: in which the arrival of the Mexicans at Tollan is fixed at 1196.

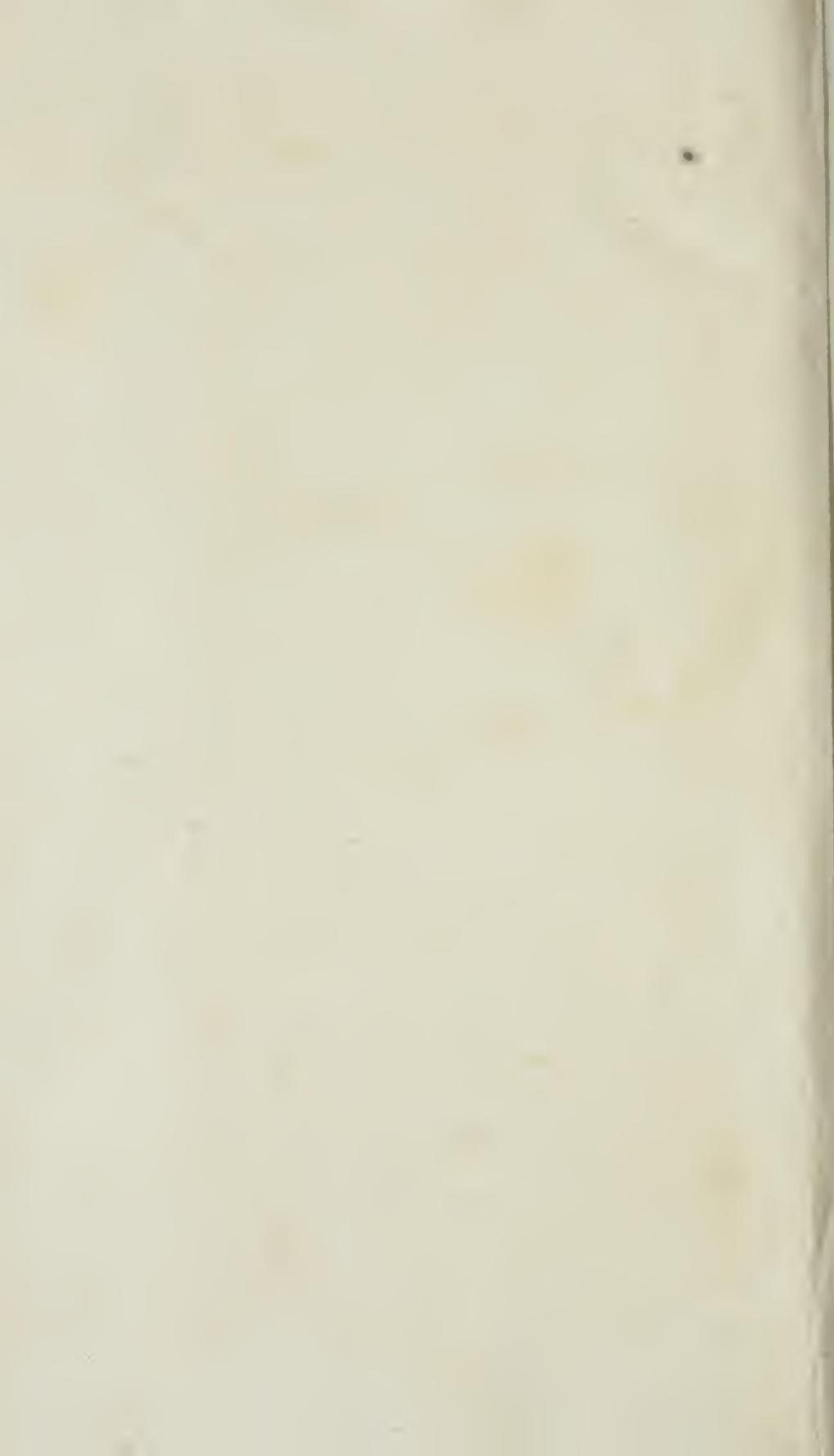
There have been many foreign writers on the History of Mexico, but most of them have compiled their works from the authorities above mentioned. The work of M. de Pauw is a philosophical extravaganza, in which, the author, having formed certain evil opinions of every thing relative to America, unhesitatingly forges facts to support his system. The Abbe Raynal, an eloquent and much estimated writer upon the Indies, was likewise embued with a sceptical spirit, and is charged by Clavigero with some gross delusions relative to the modern affairs of New Spain. He avers in relation to ancient Mexico, that "nothing

are we permitted to affirm, except, that the Mexican Empire was governed by Montezuma, at the time the Spaniards landed on the Mexican coast." Thomas Gage, an English writer, who resided some years in Mexico has been much relied upon by Dr. Robertson, but is deemed by Clavigero to be wholly unworthy of credit. Of Dr. Robertson we have heretofore sufficiently spoken. We will add here, however, that, if he did not possess all the resources of information above noticed, he possessed others entitled to respect, which we have not mentioned. We have with great pleasure availed ourselves of Dr. Robertson's work, whenever his statements were not impugned by the Abbe Clavigero. But in disputed points, we have chosen, wisely, we think, to rely on the latter.

The works of M. de Humboldt, particularly his Political Essay on New Spain, and his Researches concerning the Institutions and Monuments of the ancient inhabitants of America have shed much additional light upon the Geography, Natural History and Antiquities of Mexico, as well as on its modern civil state. We have drawn deeply from the fountains he has opened and shall revisit them hereafter.







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